CITY HILIGHTS

The Truth Speaks

MONDAY ▸ DECEMBER 1, 2025 ▸ VOL: 11 ▸ ISSUE: 136 ▸ PAGES 12 ▸ ₹2.00

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6K Afghan refugees deported from Pak and Iran in one day P8

New labour codes strengthen India's export growth P9

Rohit Sharma Smashes ODI Sixes World Record, Overtakes Shahid Afridi P12

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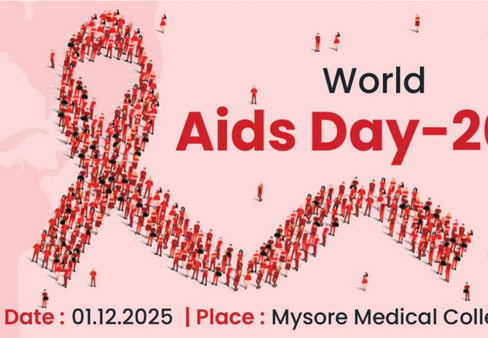
Sri. Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister

Sri. D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister



World Aids Day-2025

Theme : Overcoming disruption, transforming the AIDS response

Date : 01.12.2025 | Place : Mysore Medical College, J K Grounds Auditorium, Mysuru.

NACO National AIDS Control Organisation
GOVERNMENT OF KARNATAKA
KSAPS KARNATAKA STATE AIDS PREVENTION SOCIETY

Department of Health and Family Welfare
Karnataka State AIDS Prevention Society

Know your HIV Status, get HIV TEST FOR FREE at your nearest ICTC.

Hon'ble Health Minister Shri Dinesh Gundurao addressing during HIV campaign

AS IS ENSHRINED IN OUR CONSTITUTION, TO DEVELOP THE SCIENTIFIC TEMPER, HUMANISM AND THE SPIRIT OF INQUIRY AND REFORM IS THE FUNDAMENTAL DUTY OF EVERY CITIZEN OF THE COUNTRY.

IF ANY MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ON HIV/AIDS CALL NATIONAL TOLL FREE HELPLINE NO AIDS Helpline 1097

Download the NACO AIDS app | GET IT ON Google Play | https://kspc.karnataka.gov.in | KarSAPS

SIR TO VANDE MATARAM

Parliament all set for stormy winter 'showdown'

The government wants a special discussion, marking 150 years of Vande Mataram; intends to present its full original text in the House.

50 leaders from 36 parties attend all-party meet

Ahead of the Parliament Session to begin on Monday, a high-level strategy meeting was held at Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's residence, wherein senior ministers finalised the government's approach to steer the session. Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju has additionally convened an all-party meeting on Sunday, aiming to secure cooperation from the Opposition ahead of the session. At least 50 leaders from 36 political parties, including several Union Ministers attended the meet. Rajnath Singh, who welcomed all participants and emphasised the importance of a constructive and productive session. Jagat Prakash Nadda, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare and Chemical & Fertilisers, who also serves as Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha.

NEW DELHI

As the Winter Session of Parliament is set to begin on Monday (December 1), with political confrontation already escalating to its peak, the Union Government has scripted a multi-layered legislative and floor management strategy for the session.

While the ruling NDA coalition plans to table 10 major bills, including nuclear energy, higher education reform, corporate law, and capital markets, Parliament is expected to witness a stormy session with the Opposition preparing for a showdown over multiple issues, especially the Special Summary Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls being impmenented by the Election Commission of India (ECI).

Push for 'full' Vande Mataram

The government is also pushing for a special commemorative discussion to mark 150 years of the national song Vande Mataram, and intends to present its full original text in the House. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has previously alleged that the Congress removed specific lines from the song in 1937, and claimed the move "laid the foundation for Partition", asserting that "Partition was seeded in 1937".

13 BILLS LIKELY TO BE PRESENTED DURING DEC 1-19 SESSION

The Parliament is set to take up a slew of legislative and financial business, with the President recommending the introduction of key bills, including the Health Security and National Security Cess Bill, 2025; the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025; and the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025. The President, informed of the subject matter of the Health Security and National Security Cess Bill, has recommended its introduction under clause (1) of Article 117 and clause (1) of Article 274 of the Constitution, with consideration under clause (3) of Article 117. Similarly, the Manipur GST (Second Amendment) Bill, 2025, has received the President's recommendation for introduction and consideration under clauses (1) and (3) of Article 207, while the Central Excise (Amendment) Bill, 2025 has also been cleared under Articles 117 and 274. The opposition is likely to rake up various issues, including Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls, the Delhi blast and foreign policy matters that it wants to raise in both Houses.

Tiff not over? DKS hints at 'Delhi Temple' visit

BENGALURU

A day after his breakfast meet at Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's residence 'Kaveri' and a joint press meet thereafter to project unity, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Sunday hinted at a visit to Delhi, another sign that indicate the tussle over the top post in the Karnataka Congress government may not be fully over.

Speaking to reporters here, Shivakumar said, "Delhi is like going to a temple and state party leaders will go if needed." Suggesting unity within the government amid speculated rift between Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar over the CM post, the Deputy CM said the weather in Bengaluru is "beautiful", indicating no rift within the party.

"Because of the weather in Bengaluru, everyone would like to come to Bengaluru. It is just like Shimla. This city has beautiful weather and culture. That is why all of them are coming to Bengaluru. There is only one bus, and we are there. For Congressmen, going to Delhi is like going to a temple. It is quite natural. Whenever we need to, we go there," he said.

Earlier today, he said all is well within the state Congress ranks and there is no difference of opinion between him and Siddaramaiah. "I am well aware of my limits as Karnataka Congress president and that my party's sole focus is to prepare a strategy for the 2028 Karnataka Assembly elections," he said.

Because of the weather in Bengaluru, everyone would like to come to Bengaluru. It is just like Shimla. This city has beautiful weather and culture. That is why all of them are coming to Bengaluru. For Congressmen, going to Delhi is like going to a temple. It is quite natural. Whenever we need to, we go there.

—DK Shivakumar, Deputy CM

"There is no difference between me and the CM. Being the party president, I know my limits. Nowhere have I made any comments or expressed a difference of opinion with the CM. We are all working together. There are a lot of aspirations of the people of Karnataka, and we are committed to working for them. Our aim is 2028 and 2029, and we are working for it. The CM and I will work out a strategy. We want to call an all-party meeting on various issues," he added.

'Pak shifted 72 terror launchpads, forces ready for Op Sindoor 2.0'

JAMMU

More than six dozen terror launchpads have been shifted to the "depth areas" in Pakistan after Operation Sindoor, and the force is ready to inflict heavy losses on the enemy if the government decides to resume the cross-border operation, senior BSF officers said on Saturday.

However, the BSF is honouring the halt in military action after four days of clashes from May 7-10, they said.

"After the BSF destroyed many terror launchpads along the border during Operation Sindoor, Pakistan government shifted all such facilities to the depth areas... About 12 launchpads are working from the depth areas of Sialkot and Zaffarwal, which are not exactly on the border. "Similarly, 60 launchpads are working in the other depth areas away from the border," BSF DIG Vikram Kunwar told reporters here.

IG Anand said the BSF is ready to follow the orders of the government if it decides to resume Operation Sindoor.

Vikram Kunwar, along with BSF IG, Jammu Frontier, Shashank Anand, and DIG Kulwant Rai Sharma addressed a joint press conference to highlight the achievements of the force in 2025, including its role in Operation Sindoor, India's military response to the April 22 Pahalgam massacre with cross-border links that claimed 26 lives.

The officer said the figures of these launchpads, as well as the terrorists present in them, keep changing.

Delhi cops files fresh FIR against Rahul, Sonia in National Herald case

NEW DELHI

The Delhi police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW) filed a fresh FIR in the National Herald money laundering case on Sunday. The FIR included six names, in addition to Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi. It was registered after the ED headquarters filed a complaint with the EOW.

Meanwhile, the Rouse Avenue Court in Delhi again adjourned the decision on whether to take cognisance of the Enforcement Directorate's (ED) chargesheet in the National Herald money laundering case.

The chargesheet names several senior Congress leaders, including Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Sam Pitroda, Suman Dubey, and others, under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The ED has alleged financial irregularities involving Associated Journals Ltd (AJL), the original publisher of the National Herald. The court is now set to pronounce its order on December 16.

Earlier, the court had issued notices to Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and others, noting that they have a "right to be heard" before any decision on cognisance is taken. Special Judge Vishal Gogne stressed that this right is essential for a fair trial, as supported by Section 223 of the new criminal law.

The National Herald case originated from a complaint filed by former MP Subramanian Swamy, alleging misuse of funds by Congress leaders and companies linked to AJ

PHOTO: X

KING FOR A REASON

Virat Kohli added another feather to his decorated ODI cap, smashing his 52nd ODI hundred in the first ODI between India and South Africa at Ranchi on Sunday. The imperious knock not only anchored the Indian innings but also saw the former captain break new ground, further cementing his status as one of the game's undeniable greats. The century helped Kohli extend his own record for the most hundreds by any player in men's ODI cricket, moving him comfortably clear of the 49 tons amassed by the great Sachin Tendulkar. In the process of reaching his 52nd ODI ton, Kohli went on to break a gigantic record held by the Master Blaster Sachin Tendulkar, becoming the man with the most hundreds in a single format. Virat Kohli now has most individual hundreds in a single format - 52.

More on page 11

12 killed, 40 injured as govt buses crash head-on in TN's Sivaganga

SIVAGANGA

At least 12 people were killed and over 40 injured after two government buses collided on the Thirupattur-Karaikudi Main Road in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu on Sunday.

According to sources, the buses -one travelling from Kangeyam in Tiruppur to Karaikudi, and the other from Karaikudi in Sivaganga to Dindigul- collided head-on around 5 pm. Eight people died on the spot while three people succumbed to injuries at the Thirupattur Government Hospital.

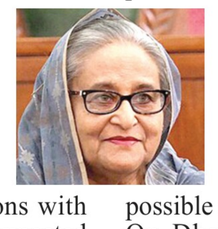
GOOD NEIGHBOURS!

'Hasina's extradition issue 'alone' won't deter ties with India'

DHAKA

Bangladesh on Sunday said it expects the extradition of deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina from India at the "earliest", but stressed that the "issue alone" would not stand as a barrier in bilateral ties with New Delhi.

The interim government's Foreign Affairs Adviser Mohammad Touhid Hossain made the remarks while talking to diplomatic reporters based in Dhaka.



"I think our (bilateral) relations won't (be) stuck on one issue alone, he said, when asked if better relations with New Delhi could be expected unless India repatriates the disposed Bangladesh premier.

Hossain, however, said that since Hasina was now a declared convict, Bangladesh expects her repatriation from India at the earliest possible time.

On Dhaka's ties with New Delhi under the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government, Hossain said, "India needs some time to adjust to the new realities." He, however, said he was hopeful the two countries would witness better ties.

Former premier Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia on November 17 by a special tribunal for "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests last year. The student-led violent street protest termed the July Uprising toppled Hasina's Awami League regime on August 5, 2024, following which she took refuge in India. She was earlier declared a fugitive by a Bangladeshi court.

QUICK READ

Driver Injured in Gas Explosion While Cooking Rice

Bengaluru

A 31-year-old lorry driver suffered serious burn injuries after a small gas cylinder exploded while he was cooking rice near the Jass toll plaza in Nelamangala. The victim, identified as Bharat Singh from Uttar Pradesh, was preparing food beside his parked vehicle when the cylinder suddenly burst, causing flames to spread across the spot. Toll staff and fellow drivers rushed to his aid and alerted emergency services. Singh was immediately shifted to the Nelamangala Taluk General Hospital, where he is currently undergoing treatment. Police are investigating the incident.

1.79 Lakh Mobile Phones Stolen in 8 Months

Bengaluru

Mobile theft continues to surge in the city, with a staggering 1.79 lakh phones reported stolen in the past eight months. Police have managed to detect 84,000 of these cases, but organised theft gangs remain active across Bengaluru. Most thefts occur in crowded areas such as buses, trains, bus stands, temples, fairs and marketplaces. In several incidents, thieves on two-wheelers target pedestrians — especially women, senior citizens and those walking alone — and snatch their phones before speeding away. Details of stolen mobiles are uploaded to the e-Lost app and the Central Equipment Identity Register (CEIR), helping police trace devices using technical clues.

Cyber Thieves Cheat ₹62 Lakh in Stock Investment Scam

Bengaluru

A software engineer and a retired employee were defrauded of a combined Rs 62 lakh in two separate online investment scams. Both victims were lured with promises of high returns through fake stock trading platforms. Following the complaints, the Whitefield Cyber Crime Police Station registered FIRs in both cases. Police said investigations are underway under Sections 66(c) and 66(d) of the Information Technology Act, along with Sections 318(4) and 319(2) of the Indian Penal Code. Authorities have urged the public to remain cautious of unsolicited investment offers circulated through digital platforms.

Schools Oppose Stray Dog Count Order

Schools accuse the civic body of shifting responsibility as stray dog rules tighten

BENGALURU

South City Corporation's directive requiring all educational institutions to conduct a survey of stray dogs on their campuses has sparked strong opposition from private school associations. The circular, issued in line with a recent Supreme Court ruling on controlling stray dogs at public institutions, instructs schools to record stray presence and ensure adequate fencing, boundary walls, and 10-ft-high gates to prevent animal ingress. The Corporation has warned that non-compliance will be treated as a violation of the court order and could attract legal consequences.

However, the directive has drawn sharp criticism from the Associated Managements of Primary and Secondary Schools of Karnataka (KAMS), which has urged the civic body to either withdraw the order or limit it to an advisory. Schools argue that the responsibility of managing stray dogs lies squarely with the municipal authorities, not educational institutions.

D. Shashi Kumar, Secretary of KAMS, said that schools are already burdened with extensive academic and administrative responsibilities, and imposing unrelated duties amounts to misuse of authority. "We have more important work concerning learning and pedagogy. Diversified tasks are already harming learning outcomes," he said.

KAMS further noted that the primary cause of stray dog proliferation near schools, hospitals and public spaces is improper waste management, particularly open garbage disposal adjacent to these premises. Unless the civic body addresses these systemic lapses, expecting schools to control stray dog populations is impractical, the association argued.

While expressing willingness to maintain campus cleanliness and prevent strays from entering school grounds, KAMS maintained that the regulation of stray animals is legally the jurisdiction of urban local bodies, as outlined under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, and the Animal Birth Control Rules, 2023.

The association also pointed out that the Supreme Court has not mandated educational institutions or their staff to conduct stray dog enumeration, making the Corporation's insistence unwarranted.

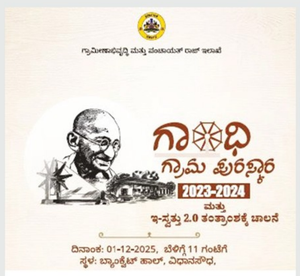
Gandhi Gram Award to 238 Gram Panchayats Today

BENGALURU

Two hundred and thirty-eight Gram Panchayats from across Karnataka will receive the prestigious Gandhi Gram Award today, in a ceremony attended by the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister at Vidhana Soudha's Banquet Hall. The annual award recognises Gram Panchayats that have demonstrated exemplary performance in delivering essential services, strengthening local governance, and improving the quality of life in rural communities.

Functioning as self-governing institutions, Gram Panchayats shoulder critical responsibilities such as providing basic amenities, maintaining infrastructure, and implementing welfare schemes. The Gandhi Gram Award, instituted to encourage and incentivise effective grassroots administration, seeks to foster competition among panchayats while motivating them to elevate service delivery. Officials believe the recognition will spur them to undertake more public development programmes and focus on enhancing living standards in rural areas.

The evaluation process for the award is based on a comprehensive set of criteria, including statutory development activities, initiatives undertaken independently by the Panchayats, implementation of government programmes, financial management, governance practices, quality of life indicators, and delivery of public services. The government developed a detailed questionnaire to collect data from Panchayats across taluks, and selections were made based on this assessment.



Presidents of the award-winning Gram Panchayats from every taluk will receive the honours from the Chief Minister and Deputy Chief Minister today at Vidhana Soudha. The award amount must be utilised exclusively for development works, Minister Priyank Kharge has instructed.

In recent reforms aimed at strengthening local bodies, the state government has brought Gram Panchayat properties under the e-Asset system to enhance their own revenue resources. A persistent challenge has been the provision of civic amenities—such as drinking water, street lighting, roads and sanitation—to houses constructed outside Gram Thanas without proper land conversion. This has imposed a significant financial burden on Panchayats. To address this, amendments were introduced to Section 199 of the Karnataka Gram Swaraj and Panchayat Raj Act, 1993, with Sections 199B and 199C added through a notification issued on April 7. These changes aim to streamline responsibilities and ensure better financial discipline.

The government hopes that recognising top-performing Panchayats will reinforce the importance of accountable and progressive local governance.

Alleged Harassment Drives Ashika's Relative to Suicide

BENGALURU

A 22-year-old woman from Hassan, identified as Achal, died by suicide at her relatives' residence in Panduranga Nagar, allegedly following prolonged sexual harassment by a drug-addicted acquaintance. The incident occurred on November 22 under the jurisdiction of the Puttanahalli Police Station. Despite the lapse of ten days, Achal's parents allege that no arrests have been made, prompting growing anger and demands for action. Achal, who had recently completed her engineering degree and was preparing to start her career, had been acquainted with Mayank, a distant relative. According to her parents, Mayank manipulated her under the pretext of love and coerced her into a physical relationship. They further allege that he continued to pressure her for sexual favours, and when she resisted, he subjected her to physical and mental harassment. Frequent threatening phone calls added to her distress, eventually pushing her towards taking the extreme step, her mother said.

CM, DCM Pay Last Respects to Actor Umesh

BENGALURU

Veteran Kannada actor MS Umesh (80), known for his prolific career and memorable comic roles, passed away on Sunday after battling a prolonged illness. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar visited Ravindra Kalakshetra to pay their last respects as the film fraternity and fans mourned the loss of one of Kannada cinema's beloved artistes.

Earlier, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah took to social media to express his grief, calling Umesh's death "painful." He remembered the veteran actor as someone who devoted decades to Kannada cinema, winning hearts through natural and effortless performances. "A heartfelt farewell to the veteran actor who made audiences laugh for years. I pray that his soul rests in peace," he wrote.

Deputy Chief Minister Shivakumar also condoled the demise, describing the news as "heartbreaking." He highlighted Umesh's vast body of work — over 350 films — and his significant contributions to the industry. Films such as Nagara Hole, Guru Shishyaru, Anupama, Kamanabillu, Apoorva Sangama, Shruti Seridaga, Haalu Sakhre, and Golmaal Radhakrishna remain audience favourites. "May his soul rest in peace, and may God give strength to his family," he posted on X.

Minister for Kannada and Culture Shivaraj Thangadgi also expressed deep sorrow, recalling Umesh as one of Kannada cinema's most gifted actors.

Accused Held for Killing Woman in Seshadripuram

BENGALURU

The police have solved the murder of 23-year-old Sharanamma, who was brutally killed in Seshadripuram on Saturday, revealing a disturbing motive behind the crime. According to investigators, the murder was driven by the accused's anger after the victim's younger sister rejected his marriage proposal. Sharanamma, a native of Vijayapura, had been working at a building under construction in Seshadripuram when she was fatally attacked with a knife by an acquaintance who fled the scene immediately after. The Seshadripuram police, acting swiftly, arrested the accused within hours of the incident.

Mother, Son Killed After Scooter Collides With Container

BENGALURU

A tragic accident on Mysuru Road claimed the lives of a mother and son on Sunday morning after their scooter collided with a moving container truck. The incident occurred around 7 a.m., when the victims, Ashwini (41) and her son Abhilash (19), fell onto the road and sustained fatal head injuries.

According to police, the two were travelling towards K.R. Market when they attempted to navigate through a narrow gap between a car and a container truck. The scooter brushed against the truck, causing both riders to lose balance and fall. Despite having helmets with them, neither was wearing one at the time, which police said resulted in severe head injuries that led to their instantaneous deaths.

DCP (Traffic), West Division, Anoop Shetty, along with Byatarayanapura Traffic Police, inspected the accident site. Preliminary investigation indicates negligence in not wearing helmets as the primary cause of the fatalities.

The victims, residents of Doddagollarhatti, were on their regular morning commute. Ashwini worked as a security guard at a hospital, and Abhilash was dropping his mother to her workplace when the accident took place.

Judges Warn Against Overreliance on AI in Courts

BENGALURU

Judges at the South Zone Regional Judicial Conference have raised strong concerns over the growing dependence on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in judicial processes, warning that hallucinated citations and fabricated judgments generated by AI tools pose a serious threat to the integrity of court proceedings. While acknowledging AI's usefulness as a research aid, they stressed that it must never replace human reasoning, constitutional principles, or judicial discretion.

Speaking on the role of e-services in the judiciary, Justice M. Sundar, Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court, observed that the digital divide within the judicial system goes far beyond economic inequalities or computer literacy. He identified three distinct layers of this divide: digital natives versus digital immigrants, the digital rich versus the digital poor with unequal access to devices and connectivity, and those with digital skills versus those without.

A fourth, emerging divide, he noted, now revolves around AI—between those who view it as a valuable tool for judges and those who fear it could erode independent judicial thinking.

Justice Sundar cautioned that AI-generated outputs must be evaluated critically and not taken at face value. He referred to incidents during court hearings where AI tools produced fabricated case laws and inconsistent responses. "You may consider AI, but you cannot rely on it entirely to make a judgment. AI tunes itself according to the prompt. It lacks the emotions and holistic understanding required in legal analysis," he said.

He cited a notable case in which a lawyer submitted a fake Supreme Court judgment generated by AI, complete with fabricated citations—an instance of "hallucination" that led to disciplinary action and the document being dismissed outright.

Emphasizing that AI lacks true cognition and merely detects patterns through data, Justice Sundar underscored the importance of strengthening the judiciary's digital ecosystem. Expanding e-service centres in remote locations, he said, is essential for ensuring equitable access to justice.

Prasad Welcomes Order Allowing Shanthakumar to Contest Polls

BENGALURU

Former India cricketer and KSCA presidential contender B.K. Venkatesh Prasad on Sunday welcomed the Karnataka High Court's decision permitting senior journalist K.N. Shanthakumar to contest the Karnataka State Cricket Association (KSCA) elections. The court set aside the earlier rejection of Shanthakumar's nomination—dismissed over a pending payment of ₹200—and directed the returning officer to proceed with the polls within the stipulated timeframe.

Reacting to the development, Prasad said he was fully prepared for the electoral battle and emphasised that his panel comprised internationally and nationally recognised cricketers, both men and women, alongside experienced administrators and qualified professionals. "Together, we are committed to restoring the glory of Karnataka cricket and reviving the spirit of our iconic M. Chinnaswamy Stadium after the stampede tragedy that deeply hurt the cricket fraternity," he said.

College Student Dies by Suicide; Police Recover Eight-Page Note

BENGALURU

A 19-year-old B. Pharmacy student from Hassan died by suicide at a paying guest accommodation near Hesaraghatta on the outskirts of Bengaluru. The incident occurred at Petals Girls PG, which falls under the Soladevanahalli police limits. The deceased, identified as Vatsala, was in her final year at a reputed college in the city.

Police visited the spot and have registered a case of Unnatural Death Report (UDR). Officials said they are speaking with the family, friends and college authorities to understand the circumstances that may have led to the incident.

According to police, an eight-page note was recovered from the room. In the note, the student expressed emotional distress, spoke about her family, and mentioned feeling unworthy of the love and support she had received. She also addressed her father and a person she cared about, indicating deep personal turmoil.

Investigators said the contents of the note would form part of the inquiry, but urged against speculation until the investigation is complete.

Authorities have appealed to students to seek timely help if they are struggling with academic or emotional pressures. Mental health professionals reiterated that counselling support is available for those experiencing distress.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed or experiencing thoughts of self-harm, please reach out to helplines such as Arogya Sahayavani (104) or Sneha (044-24640050).

CITY EGG CRUNCH

Shortage of 30–40 Lakh Eggs Daily in City

BENGALURU

As prices of fruits and vegetables continue to rise, chicken eggs have now joined the list of essential items becoming costlier, with Bengaluru facing a significant daily shortage. Demand for eggs, chicken and fish typically increases during the winter season, and eggs see especially high consumption. The festive period, with heightened cake production for Christmas and New Year, has added further pressure on egg supplies.

Compounding the problem, poultry farming has slowed since last year's bird flu outbreak, reducing production across the state. According to the Karnataka Poultry Traders' Association, Bengaluru requires around 1.1 crore eggs every day, but the market is currently short by 30–40 lakh eggs.

The shortage has pushed retail prices up sharply. Eggs that were sold at Rs 5 each are now priced between Rs 7 and Rs 8. A major contributing factor is the large-scale export of eggs from Namakkal in Tamil Nadu—around 79 lakh eggs per day—leading to reduced supply for Karnataka's markets.

Chicken prices have also spiralled. Broiler chicken now sells for Rs 150 per kg, while farm chicken costs around Rs 170 per kg. With rising prices of both chicken and eggs, the cost of food items prepared from them is expected to increase in the coming weeks.

Traders estimate that the situation is unlikely to improve for at least two to three months, given the current supply constraints and seasonal demand.

QUICK READ

One-Trip Special Train between Bengaluru and Belagavi

Bengaluru

To accommodate the expected passenger rush during the Christmas season, South Western Railway will operate a one-trip special express train between Sir M Visvesvaraya Terminal (SMVT) Bengaluru and Belagavi. Train No. 06503 will depart SMVT Bengaluru at 7 pm on December 24, reaching Belagavi at 8:25 am the next day. The return service, Train No. 06504, will leave Belagavi at 5:30 pm on December 28, arriving at SMVT Bengaluru at 5:00 am the following day. The train will halt at Tumakuru, Arasikere, Birur, Davanagere, Harihar, SMM Haveri, SSS Hubballi, Dharwad, Alnavar, Londa, and Khanapur stations.

BWSSB Invites Water Tech Startups to Collaborate

Bengaluru

The Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) will open its doors to startup firms working on innovative water and wastewater solutions, BWSSB Chairman Ram Prasat Manohar announced. Speaking at the inauguration of purification machinery installed by Bosan Whitewater, he said the board aims to make Bengaluru a hub for water startups. The first startup has already received approval, and BWSSB plans to offer future startups free access to its units for projects in water management, recycling.

Activists Urge Action to Protect Bannerghatta National Park

A combination of infrastructure projects and the reduction of its Eco-Sensitive Zone were severely fragmenting South India's wildlife corridors

BENGALURU

Environmental and wildlife activists have demanded urgent measures to protect Bannerghatta National Park (BNP), citing multiple threats to its ecological integrity. At a press conference organised by the Bannerghatta Nature Conservation Trust (BNCT), speakers highlighted that BNP serves as a vital corridor connecting the Western and Eastern Ghats, including the Mysore Elephant Reserve, Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary, and Bandipur National Park.

Wildlife photographer Kiran Urs emphasised the park's role in enabling the movement and genetic exchange of species such as elephants and tigers. "Destroying these corridors due to urbanisation and infrastructure projects threatens wildlife movement and exacerbates human-wildlife conflict," Urs said.

Activist Bhanuprakash raised concerns over the 2018 Central government notification that reduced BNP's Eco-Sensitive Zone from 268.9 sq km to 168.84 sq km, allegedly opening previously protected buffer zones to mining and commercial activities.

Compounding the issue is the ongoing construction of the National Highways Authority of India's six-lane elevated flyover, part of the Satellite Town Ring Road project, which cuts across 3.85 km of the park's core and buffer zones. Critics argue that mitigation measures such as sound barriers and underpasses are inadequate.

BNCT founder Vishnu Narain also opposed plans for a new airport near the Bannerghatta-Kanakapura belt adjacent to the Eco-Sensitive Zone, calling it an unsustainable development model. Activists urged authorities to reconsider development plans and implement stronger conservation measures to safeguard one of South India's most critical wildlife corridors.

GBA Deploys Emergency Medical Team at Falcon City

BENGALURU

Residents report gastroenteritis cases, prompting swift action by health authorities.

Following reports of gastroenteritis among residents of Falcon City in Vasavanthapura Ward under Bengaluru South City Corporation, the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) deployed emergency medical teams to contain the outbreak. The Health Department, along with 20 staff members, inspected the residential complex and assessed the situation after complaints surfaced on November 12.

Investigations revealed that the Apollo Clinic within Falcon City had been treating nearly three gastroenteritis cases daily from October 6 to November 12. Immediate measures included deploying four medical teams to conduct first-aid and outreach camps from November 12 to 27, providing residents with preventive guidance and health education.

A total of 177 residents received treatment at local hospitals. Water supply systems, including the main source, storage sumps, overhead tanks, and individual flats, were thoroughly inspected. Samples collected were sent to the Public Health Institute for analysis to determine contamination levels.

The apartment management has been issued a notice directing them to clean and disinfect all water sources, storage sumps, and tanks. They are required to maintain water quality in accordance with World Health Organization (WHO) standards to prevent further infections.

Culture and Values Important Alongside Education: Ramesh Bhat

BENGALURU

Veteran Kannada actor Sri Ramesh Bhat emphasised the importance of instilling cultural values in children alongside academic learning during the inauguration of the new Academic Block at Deeksha STEM School, Kengeri.

The Kengeri campus, now officially recognised as the fourth CBSE-affiliated STEM school in Bengaluru, joins the network of campuses at Judicial Layout, Vidyanagar, and Bannerghatta Road. The new block features advanced laboratories, design studios, collaborative learning spaces, and AI-enhanced English labs, supporting a future-ready STEM curriculum.

Bhat highlighted that education alone is insufficient; children must also be taught the traditions, arts, and ethics that shape society. "While STEM equips students for tomorrow, culture and values guide them to become responsible citizens," he said.

The inauguration was complemented by Namma Carnival, a celebration of Karnataka's heritage, where students, parents, and visitors engaged in traditional games, cultural performances, and art activities.

Dr G Sridhar, Founder of Deeksha STEM School, noted that the Kengeri campus reflects the school's vision of blending academic rigour with cultural awareness, fostering creativity, scientific thinking, and real-world application.

Cold Wave Hits B'luru: Doctors Advise Precautions

BENGALURU

Children and the elderly in Bengaluru have been increasingly falling ill over the past week due to dropping temperatures and cold winds. Doctors warn that the cold spell is expected to intensify in the coming days, potentially causing more health issues. Cloudy afternoons and chilly mornings have prompted residents to wear sweaters, shawls, and warm clothing. Those venturing out for walks, especially during early mornings and evenings, are taking extra care to stay protected from the cold. Hospitals, including KC General, report a gradual rise in patients with colds, headaches, and mild fevers.

DK Shivakumar Asserts Loyalty, Denies Factionalism within Cong

BENGALURU

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar reaffirmed his commitment to party unity, stressing he has never had differences with Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and would not form any faction within the Congress. Speaking to the media, Shivakumar said, "I went to Delhi, but I didn't take a single MLA with me. I could have taken eight or ten people, but it wouldn't have been of any use. I have always worked to keep everyone together." He added that if he were to become party president, he would continue to unite all 140 MLAs. "There is no difference of opinion between me and others. Only God knows how loyally I have worked for the party," he said. Shivakumar also highlighted his loyalty during the HD Kumaraswamy government.

Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department

Gandhi Grama Puraskara
2023-2024

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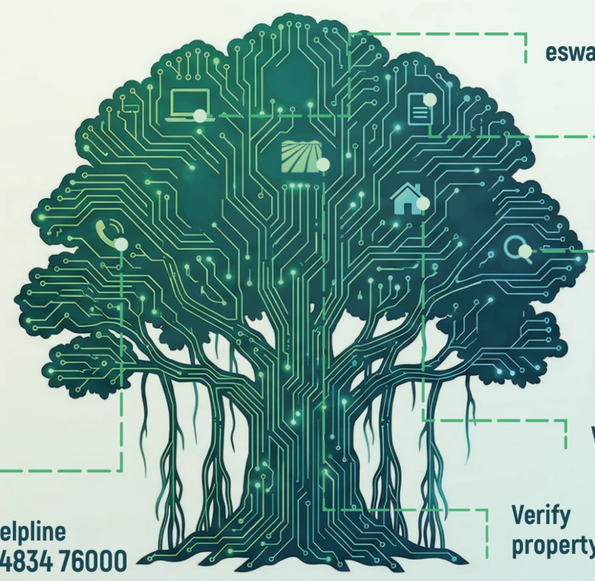

Inauguration
Shri Siddaramaiah
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka

Eminent Presence
Shri D.K. Shivakumar
Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka

Presided By
Shri Priyank Kharge
Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, E, IT & BT Department, Government of Karnataka

Chief Guest
Shri Rizwan Arshad
Hon'ble Member of Legislative Assembly Shivajinagar Constituency

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Published by: Karnataka Panchayat Raj Commissionerate, RDPR

QUICK READ

Five hurt in multi-car crash on highway

Hosur

A serious accident involving a lorry and four cars occurred on the Bengaluru-Chennai Highway near Perandapalli, Hosur, leaving five people seriously injured. Authorities said the cars were badly crushed, causing a major traffic jam. Police used a crane to clear the wreckage and restore the flow of vehicles. The injured were rushed to a nearby private hospital for treatment. Officials are investigating the cause of the collision. Motorists are advised to exercise caution while traveling on this stretch as the clean-up and inquiry continue. Traffic has now started moving slowly.

Union Minister Joshi criticizes CM, DCM power struggle

Joshi accused the state government of ignoring farmers, failing to implement central support schemes amid internal conflicts

HUBBALLI

Union Food and Civil Supplies Minister Pralhad Joshi has criticized the state Congress leadership, saying that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar are engaged in a power struggle while claiming to support unity.

Speaking to the media in Hubballi, Joshi commented on the ongoing fight for the CM's chair, saying that the party high command ultimately decides power sharing. "On the surface, they talk about unity, but behind the scenes, the fight continues," he said, adding a sarcastic remark about breakfast to underline the drama.

He noted that both leaders have met with AICC President Mallikarjun Kharge, yet nothing substantial has emerged from these discussions. "CM and DCM are chanting unity slogans and even taking extreme steps to win MLA support. But the battle for the CM seat is serious, and the state's interests are being ignored," Joshi said sharply.

Joshi also accused the state government of neglecting farmers. He pointed out that the central government has provided support for sugarcane and maize farmers, including permissions for ethanol production and minimum support prices. "It is the state government's responsibility to implement these schemes properly. Yet, their internal conflicts are taking priority over farmers' welfare," he added.

Highlighting central initiatives, Joshi praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Mann Ki Baat program. "Through Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister shares new ideas, projects, and inspiration with the youth. It motivates everyone to contribute positively to society," he said.

He further mentioned that the central government has allocated Rs 100 crore to startups under the Department of Renewable Energy, supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. "This is a matter of pride and shows how proactive governance can benefit citizens," Joshi remarked.

The minister's comments underline growing concerns about political infighting affecting governance and the urgent need for leaders to focus on state development and citizen welfare rather than personal power struggles.

1 dead, 26 injured as school bus overturns

KARWAR

Police said the bus overturned near Sule Murki Cross after the driver lost control, throwing students off; villagers and passers-by rushed to assist and alert emergency services

A joyful school field trip turned into a heartbreaking tragedy near Sule Murki in Honnavar on Sunday, when a school bus carrying students overturned, leaving one student dead and more than 26 others injured. The accident happened as children from Mysuru's Taralabalu Vidya Sanstha were travelling to Gokarna for an educational tour.

The deceased student has been identified as 15-year-old Pawan, an SSLC student from Mysuru. According to early reports, he died on the spot due to severe injuries. The injured children were immediately shifted to Honnavar Government Hospital for treatment. Doctors said the condition of a few students is serious, and they are being closely monitored by medical teams.

Police officials said the bus overturned after the driver reportedly lost control near Sule Murki Cross. The sudden turn caused the vehicle to topple, throwing several students off their seats. Local villagers and passers-by rushed to help the children and quickly alerted emergency services.

Authorities from the Honnavar police station soon arrived at the scene and began an investigation. They inspected the accident spot, questioned witnesses and checked the vehicle's condition. A case has been registered, and officials will examine whether speeding, negligence or mechanical failure caused the mishap.

Parents, teachers and local residents expressed deep grief over the tragic loss of young Pawan. Many demanded stricter safety rules for school trips, including proper checks on drivers and buses before children are taken on long journeys.

Sunday's accident has once again raised concerns about the safety of school transportation in the region. With several students still recovering, the community is hoping for their quick healing while mourning the life that was lost in this unfortunate incident.

Creative painting contest celebrates young artistic talent

HUBBALLI

KLE Technological University in Hubballi hosted its annual Kaladevi-2025 painting competition, creating a lively and colourful environment for school children to explore their imagination and creativity. The event aimed to inspire young minds by giving them a platform to express themselves through art in an encouraging and vibrant atmosphere.

More than 600 students from various schools across Hubballi-Dharwad participated in the competition, filling the KLE Tech campus with joyful energy. The event featured three categories to ensure fair participation: Class A for students from Classes 3 to 5, Class B for Classes 6 and 7, and Class C for students from Classes 8 to 10. Children in each group used bright colours and creative ideas to bring their thoughts to life on paper, making the campus a true celebration of young talent.

Kaladevi-2025 was organised with strong support from the Regional Transport Office, Rotary Club, Inner Wheel Club, and the NSS division of KLE Technological University.

Their collaboration helped create a smooth, well-structured programme that allowed children to confidently showcase their creativity. The organisers said such partnerships strengthen community involvement and help children gain exposure beyond the classroom.

To encourage outstanding talent, attractive prizes were announced across all categories. These awards were designed not only to recognise excellence but also to motivate young artists to continue pursuing their passion. Teachers and parents who attended the event praised the university for creating an inspiring environment that nurtures creativity at a young age.

Throughout the day, the atmosphere remained cheerful as children interacted, shared ideas, and proudly displayed their artwork. The event once again proved how platforms like Kaladevi help build confidence, support artistic growth, and celebrate the creative spirit of the region's young learners.

Karnataka abolished 18 municipal health officer posts, introduced new roles, and maintained existing pay scales for affected employees

Govt removes medical officer post in Hubballi Corporation

HUBBALLI

The Urban Development Department has cancelled the post of the Medical Officer in the Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation, creating concern among public representatives and local residents. The state government issued an official order stating that the post has now been replaced with the designation of Executive Engineer (Environment), who will take charge of all activities previously handled by the health department within the corporation.

According to the order, this change is part of a wider restructuring. A total of 18 health officer posts across municipal corporations in Karnataka, except the Greater Bengaluru Authority, have been abolished. In their place, new roles such as Assistant Executive Engineer, Senior Programmer, and Administrative Officer have been introduced. Though the responsibilities have shifted, the government has clarified that the pay scale remains unchanged for the affected employees.

The move traces back to 2022, when the Director of Municipal Administration submitted a proposal to amend the Uniform Cadre and Recruitment Rules, 2011. Since the municipal corporation hospitals have already been transferred to the state health department, the government decided that the Medical Officer post was no longer necessary. A detailed note regarding these changes was also submitted to the Finance Department before final approval.

However, the decision has sparked dissatisfaction among public representatives, who feel the removal of the Medical Officer post may weaken the corporation's ability to respond quickly to local health issues. Many citizens have also expressed concern over shifting health responsibilities to engineering officials, fearing it may affect the quality and focus of public health services.

Despite these reactions, the Urban Development Department maintains that the restructuring will bring clarity, reduce overlapping roles, and improve administrative efficiency within municipal bodies.

Datta Jayanti flex vandalized in Chikkamagaluru

CHIKKAMAGALURU

In Chikkamagaluru city, miscreants vandalized a Datta Jayanti flex by cutting it with a blade. The flex, installed by a Hindu organization in front of the Urdu school on IG Road, was torn early this week. City police have registered a suo moto case and are reviewing CCTV footage to identify and apprehend the culprits. Authorities have assured heightened vigilance ahead of the festival, which will be celebrated at Datta Peetha from December 2 to 4. Police are urging residents to report any suspicious activity as investigations continue into the act of vandalism.

Folk festival shines with stunning creative costumes

KARWAR

The Dindi festival held during the Jatra Mahotsava at the Narayana Temple in Amdalli village of Karwar taluk became a colourful celebration of folk culture, drawing thousands of visitors. Known for its strong traditional roots, this year's event amazed crowds with its grand mock show, or Hagarana Jatre, which blended heritage with fresh creativity.

The biggest attraction of the festival was the huge costumes of animals, birds, and mythological figures. Giant models of fish, dinosaurs, storks, tigers, chimpanzees, zebras, and turtles moved through the procession, surprising spectators with their bright colours and beautiful decoration. More than a hundred people worked together to create these replicas, and villagers applauded the youth who carried the heavy structures on their shoulders while dancing.

The mythological section also stood out, especially the artistic display of the Ganga flowing from Lord Shiva's head. The creative use of lighting made the scene look almost real, giving the procession a divine touch. Large models of Anjaneya, Bhishma's bed, various forms of Krishna, and ghostly characters added drama and excitement. A touching moment came when many villagers joined hands to show respect to the Shirdi Sai Baba costume.

The festival also shared important environmental and social messages. Costumes representing wild people highlighted forest conservation, while a mock school scene used humour to share lessons on social responsibility. These thoughtful additions were well received by the crowd.

BJP stages protest seeking fair support price for maize

KOPPAL

Farmers in Yelaburga gathered in protest on Sunday, demanding a proper support price for maize. BJP leaders joined the demonstration, accusing the state government of ignoring the struggles of farmers. Former minister Halappa Achar said the Congress government, led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, has failed to protect farmers' interests at a time when they are facing severe hardship.

He argued that the government has drained the state treasury through unnecessary spending and is now unable to support farmers with fair crop prices. Many farmers are upset that the maize they have grown is not fetching a reasonable rate, leaving them in financial difficulty.

During the protest, BJP Mandal President Maruthi Hosamani and leaders Basavalingappa Bhuthe, Veeranna Hubballi, Suresh Gowda Shivana Gowda, and Hanchyalappa Talavara addressed the gathering. They said farmers work hard throughout the year, and it is the government's duty to ensure they receive fair compensation for their produce.

Speakers C.H. Police Patil and Shivaleela Dalvai also criticized the government for what they called poor handling of agricultural issues. They stressed the need for an immediate decision on a support price to prevent further loss to farmers. Several leaders, including Shivakumar, Kallappa Karamudi, Basavaraja, Guruguli, and Shivappa Vaadi, participated along with a large number of local farmers.

Rotary launches district cultural contest 2025

MOODBIDRI

The Rotary Celebration 2025 district-level cultural competition was launched on Sunday at the Rotary Central School in Moodbidri. The event was organized by the Rotary Club of Moodbidri Temple Town, which aims to promote local culture and strengthen community bonds through its activities. District Governor of Rotary District 3181, Ramakrishna P.K., praised the club for its work and said that building a club is important, but leading it well is even more meaningful.

He noted that the cultural work done by the Moodbidri club reflects the traditions and values of the region. He added that such programs help people come together and celebrate the rich heritage of the area. The event attracted participants from different parts of the district, making it an active gathering filled with enthusiasm and talent.

Assistant Governor Dr. Rajaram K.V., who was also a chief guest, said Rotary has always contributed to society through efforts in education, culture and sports. He explained that the organization continues to support service activities that benefit students, artists and the larger community.

Other dignitaries present included District Secretary of the Program Department Umesh K., District Cultural Department President Praveen Perera, Zone 4 Assistant Governor Umesh Rao Mijar, and representatives from Rotary's education wing such as Narayana P.M. Assistant Governors Dr. A. Jayakumar Shetty and K. Padmanabha Rai, Zone Lieutenant C.H. Abdul Gafoor, and businessman Prabhat Chandra Jain were also guests at the event.

Club President Harish M.K. and Secretary Bharat Shetty welcomed everyone and shared details about the cultural competitions planned for this year's celebration. Cultural Coordinator Dr. Mahavir Jain helped guide the program smoothly.

Sarita Harish and Dr. Pranamya Jain served as comperes, ensuring the event moved forward with energy and clarity.

CALL FOR STRONGER ROAD SAFETY

Mysuru officials push for stronger road safety measures

MYSURU

Authorities in Mysuru have renewed their call for stronger road safety after two accident victims were sent to the Bhopal district hospital for post-mortem tests. Officials said the results will help confirm the exact cause of death. They urged drivers to be more careful on rural highways, especially at night, as accidents continue to rise in many parts of the region.

During a review meeting at the Mysuru South Regional Transport Department, officials shared several major updates aimed at improving transport services and strengthening public safety. One of the key developments is the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation's proposal to introduce 100 electric buses in Mysuru district. Preparations for servicing these buses have already started at the Bannimantap depot.

Another major step is the proposal to build a new bus stand in Tagadur. Work on the Mysuru New Rural Bus Stand, which is being built at a cost of ₹120 crore, is also progressing steadily. These projects are expected to improve transport facilities and make rural travel easier for passengers in the coming years.

From April to October 2025, the Regional Transport Department collected ₹648 crore in revenue. Recent inspections resulted in fines worth ₹15.17 crore, showing stronger efforts to curb violations and unsafe driving practices. Officials also stressed the importance of cleanliness at bus stands and directed KSRTC staff to regularly check toilet facilities to ensure better service for passengers.

Authorities warned officers to stay alert against middlemen and unregistered driving schools that try to influence processes at transport offices. They said such behaviour must be stopped and reminded staff to work with full honesty and transparency.

QUICK READ

Athani traffic chaos worsens, public frustrated

Athani

Traffic congestion in Athani town is worsening, causing major inconvenience to residents and commuters. Vehicles parked haphazardly in front of commercial shops, banks, medical stores, and public offices along the Chikkodi-Vijayapura highway are narrowing the roads, leading to frequent jams. Areas near Athani Civil Hospital are especially affected due to unplanned parking. While authorities began work on a bypass road from the Siddeshwara temple outskirts to ease congestion, progress has stalled. Locals hope the bypass's early completion will restore smooth traffic flow and reduce daily gridlocks in the busy town.

Nippani school headmistress suspended for misconduct

Chikkodi

The headmistress of KHPS No. 3 School in Nippani Nagar, M.T. Ramachandran, has been suspended for allegedly selling milk and food items to students. The District Deputy Public Instruction (DDPI) R.S. Sitaramu issued the suspension immediately after reviewing reports from the Block Education Officer and officials. Allegations included unhygienic school conditions, and rat droppings found in grains like rice, dal, and wheat. Local leader Kapila Kamate had threatened protests if action was not taken. Authorities acted swiftly, citing serious dereliction of duty, ensuring the safety and well-being of students at the school.

HDK criticizes Cong govt for neglecting farmers' needs

Kumaraswamy accused CM Siddaramaiah of neglecting farmers' water needs, mishandling the Tungabhadra dam, and rising police involvement in crimes

SHIVAMOGGA

Union Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy strongly criticized the Congress government, saying it has failed to focus on the state's development and has even struggled with tax collection. Speaking at a press conference at the JDS district office in Shivamogga, he said that most departments are suffering because budget allocations are not being released properly. According to him, the government has used only 40–45 percent of the funds meant for various projects, and tax collection may see a loss of nearly ₹15,000 crore.

Kumaraswamy said many school buildings across Karnataka are in poor condition. He pointed out that the state needs 65,000 teachers, yet no major steps have been taken to fill these posts. Although the government talks about improving public schools and building new ones under CSR grants, he questioned where the required funds will actually come from.

He clarified that he has never said the state treasury is empty, and he will not criticize guarantee schemes lightly. However, he attacked the irrigation minister, saying he is more interested in renaming Bengaluru blocks than solving irrigation problems. According to him, the government is not monitoring administration properly and is instead focused on maintaining power.

Kumaraswamy also targeted Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, accusing him of ignoring farmers' water needs and mishandling issues like the Tungabhadra dam. He alleged that police involvement in crimes has increased under the current government, reminding people of previous incidents during Siddaramaiah's earlier term.

He also responded sharply to D.K. Shivakumar's comments and spoke about efforts to revive Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Limited (VISL) through a planned ₹4,000-crore investment. He insisted that Deve Gowda never used religious leaders for political gain and said Siddaramaiah cannot surpass the achievements of former chief minister Devaraj Urs.

Min Gundurao calls for strong steps to reduce mortality

SHIVAMOGGA

The minister emphasized tracking all high-risk pregnancies, timely ANC registration, and implementing focused interventions as maternal and infant mortality rates remain above the state average

Health and Family Welfare Minister Dinesh Gundurao has directed officials in Shivamogga district to take strong and urgent steps to reduce both maternal and infant mortality rates. Speaking at a health department progress review meeting held at the DHO office on Sunday, he stressed that ensuring a balanced sex ratio must also be treated as a top priority.

The minister said high-risk pregnant women must be tracked 100 percent and ANC registration should be completed within the required time. He noted that the district's maternal mortality rate stands at 80, while the infant mortality rate is 15.1. Although the infant rate is slightly lower than last year, both figures are still higher than the state average, calling for focused interventions.

He directed officials to study the low birth numbers in Soraba, Shivamogga, and Bhadravati and check if any illegal gender detection practices are occurring. Delayed ANC registrations should also be reviewed, and detailed reports must be submitted.

Gundurao noted that births in Community Health Centres remain low. He said obstetricians and anaesthetists from low-performing CHCs may be shifted to taluk hospitals to ensure 24/7 services. Strengthening taluk hospitals, he said, would reduce the load on the District Megan Hospital.

The minister reviewed immunisation, noting that the district's MR vaccination rate is 91 percent—below the state's 95 percent average. He directed officials to raise the coverage and review vaccination in private hospitals.

Under the AMPK program, screening of over 1.14 lakh students revealed mild to severe anaemia, for which treatment is ongoing. The Home Health Program, unique to Karnataka, has diagnosed several chronic diseases, including diabetes, kidney issues, breast cancer, and cervical cancer. He urged health workers to improve door-to-door screening.

Gundurao also warned officials to stay alert about Kyasanur Forest Disease (KFD), as 72 positive cases and two deaths have been recorded this year. A new testing lab will soon open in Sirsi. Disease updates on dengue, malaria, chikungunya, TB, and leprosy were also reviewed.

The meeting was attended by district health officials and medical officers.

Kodagu police annual games conclude successfully

MADIKERI

The three-day annual sports meet of Kodagu district police concluded successfully, with participation from over 900 personnel across all police stations in the district.

Organized at DAR Stadium, the Games featured various track and field events, as well as cricket, volleyball, kabaddi, and tug-of-war competitions. Officers and staff showcased their physical prowess and sportsmanship, participating actively without any senior-junior distinctions.

The event provided police personnel a refreshing break from daily duties while highlighting teamwork, fitness, and competitive spirit. Spectators enjoyed thrilling matches, reflecting the dedication and sporting talent of Kodagu's police force.

Activists say the Karwar rally will highlight forest dwellers' long-standing struggles for legal recognition and urgent government action

Uttara Kannada forest dwellers mobilise for rights rally

KARWAR

Forest dwellers from across Uttara Kannada are preparing for a major show of unity in Karwar on December 6. Their goal is simple yet important: to demand fair rights over the land they have lived on and cultivated for generations. Many of them say they have been trapped by strict laws that prevent them from farming freely, even though the land is their only source of livelihood.

At a planning meeting held in Sirsi, Ravindra Naik, president of the Forest Land Rights Activists' Forum, spoke about the growing strength of the movement. He said people from different parts of the district are coming together with new energy and hope. According to him, the fight for forest land rights has reached a key turning point, especially concerning cultivation rights. He added that the community is waiting for a positive and final decision from the government during the ongoing Belgaum Winter Session.

The activists believe that the government now has a chance to resolve long-standing issues faced by forest dwellers. Many families have lived on these lands for decades but continue to struggle for legal recognition. The upcoming rally in Karwar is expected to bring these concerns into focus and remind leaders that the community's patience is running out. The meeting in Sirsi saw the presence of district conveners Ibrahim Gowdalli, Rafiq, Lakshmana Naik, Jayashree Naik, Mableshwar T. Naik from Honnavar, and several others. They discussed plans to ensure smooth travel, strong participation, and peaceful demonstration on the day of the event.

For the forest dwellers, this rally is more than a protest. It is a call for dignity, fairness, and the right to live without fear on the land they consider home.

Mulki town celebrates book showcasing region's cultural legacy

MULKI

The town of Mulki witnessed a warm and proud moment as community members gathered to celebrate the release of a book that highlights the area's rich culture and achievements. KPCC general secretary Inayat Ali praised the people of Mulki, saying they are known for their good values and strong traditions. He added that publishing a book that reveals and protects this cultural identity is truly commendable.

He was speaking at the launch of the book "Mulkiya Keerthi Sesha Sadhakaru", written and edited by Harishchandra P. Salian. The event was a respectful gathering of local leaders, cultural supporters, and community members who wished to honour Mulki's heritage. Former KSP state president Dr. Harikrishna Punaroor presided over the programme and shared his thoughts on the importance of remembering and recording local history.

Several notable guests attended the function, including former Dakshina Kannada district SP president Pradeep Kumar Kalkura, respected Mulki physician Dr. Arun Kudda, social worker K.M. Kotian, and Mulki Billava Sangha president Vamana Kotian Nadikudru. Others present included Dhananjaya Anchan of KS Rao Nagar, Gopinath Padanga, Harishchandra P. Salian, and Vasu Poojary Chitrapu. Their presence added weight to the event, showing strong community support for cultural preservation.

A special moment of the evening was the felicitation of Udupi District Rajyotsava Award winner Bhaskar Bangera.

Official's harassment pushes Panchayat leader toward suicide

DAVANAGERE

A tense situation unfolded at the Jagalur taluk panchayat office when Thippeswamy, vice-president of the Hanumanthapura Gram Panchayat, attempted suicide by pouring petrol on himself. He claimed that officials were harassing him to release a bill linked to repair works he had already completed in Bharamasamudra village. His act shocked the staff present, who quickly intervened, grabbed the petrol bottle, and poured water on him to prevent a tragedy.

According to Thippeswamy, the panchayat had undertaken repairs worth several lakhs, including fixing motors, restoring street lights, and cleaning drains. He stated that these works were completed responsibly, yet the bill payment was being delayed deliberately. He accused PDO Kotresh of repeatedly pressuring him and creating hurdles in releasing the amount. Thippeswamy said he had taken loans to execute the work and was now burdened with debt. Struggling to support his family and educate his three daughters, he felt cornered and helpless.

He further alleged that PDO Kotresh had withdrawn funds under Class 15 and Class 1 categories but still refused to clear the dues. Whenever he questioned the delay, he was threatened, he said. Thippeswamy described himself as a poor labourer who depended entirely on these payments to manage his family's needs.

Taluk Panchayat Executive Officer Kenchappa confirmed that there had been several complaints against PDO Kotresh.

Rajya Sabha MP Eranna warns against politics during cultural fairs

MUDALAGI

Rajya Sabha MP Eranna Kadadi has expressed deep concern over the growing trend of mixing politics with traditional fairs. He said it is important to stay alert when some people try to disturb social harmony by bringing party and caste politics into cultural celebrations. He shared his views on Sunday after visiting the temple during the Sri Mahalakshmi Devi and Sri Hanumantha Deva Jatra Mahotsava held in Thigadi village of Mudalagi taluk.

Kadadi said cultural fairs have always helped build strong relationships in rural areas. He added that such gatherings play a key role in promoting peace, unity, and shared identity among people. However, he regretted that rapid modern changes are influencing society and slowly replacing long-standing traditions with Western ideas. He stressed that preserving local customs is essential to maintaining the cultural strength of Karnataka.

He encouraged the youth to take active part in fairs and festivals, saying that their participation will help protect the pride, history, and values of the state. According to him, these celebrations are not just religious events but moments that bring communities together. Kadadi said that when politics enters these spaces, the true purpose of fairs gets diluted, and divisions may grow among people who otherwise live together peacefully.

Several prominent leaders joined him on the occasion, showing their support for cultural unity. Those present included Lingaraja Angadi, Basavaraj Gadavi, Basavaraj Bendavade, Eshwar Gadavi, Shivananda Hunnoli, Shivananda Angadi, Kempanna Teli, Srimantha Bhubannavar, Mallesh Huchchannavar, Mahadeva Bhujannavar, Suresh Thokratti and Sadashiva Huchchannavar. Their presence highlighted the importance of maintaining the purity and harmony of traditional festivals.

Kadadi concluded by reminding everyone that fairs belong to the people, not to politics, and must remain spaces of togetherness and cultural pride.

SWABHIMANI BANA LAUNCH

'Strong collective voice needed to protect Kannada'

RAMANAGARA

Karnataka Rakshana Vedike State President P. Krishne Gowda said that Kannada can grow strongly at the grassroots level only when people raise a united, non-partisan, and secular voice for the survival of the language. He was speaking at the inauguration of the City Shine branch of Karnataka Rakshana Vedike Swabhimani Bana and the Kannada Rajyotsava celebration held in Hejjala village of Bidadi Hobli.

Gowda said that whenever issues of land, water, or language arise, every citizen, even the most humble, must speak up. He reminded people not to join the organisation for personal gain or political benefits. He added that the Swabhimani Bana wing is committed to both social work and continuous struggle for Kannada. As part of its service efforts, the organisation has adopted 48 schools across Karnataka and is working to improve their development.

State in-charge president Shivagouda said that the organisation is building strong units at the village, hobli, taluk, district, and state levels. He said their aim is to support the voiceless, stand against injustice, and provide help through service activities. This, he added, will make the organisation stronger and closer to the people.

Manchanayakanahalli Gram Panchayat member Shantaraju and former member Venkatesh also addressed the gathering. During the event, retired soldier Ninganna Gowdar, theatre artist Venkatachari, and retired teacher Krishnappa were honoured for their work in different fields.

The event was attended by state vice president Shivakumar, City Shine president R. Manoj, vice president Venkatesh, general secretary Murali, working president Prakash, in-charge Srinivas, labour unit president Dhananjayya, drivers' unit president Rajanna, treasurer Vijesh, organising secretary Venkatesh, spokesperson Kumar, hotel unit president Kumar, vice president Muniraju, youth unit president Manu, working president Sharath, and many others.

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QUICK READ

Woman molested in moving car after being drugged

Kolkata

The Kolkata Police have arrested one person in connection with the molestation of a woman inside a car in Kolkata on November 28, said officials on Sunday. Officers of the Pragati Maidan police station arrested the 24-year-old accused, who was in a car along with two other men when the incident took place. He was earlier identified through CCTV footage. One person has been arrested on charges of molesting a young woman inside a car. The complaint was lodged against three men. Search is on to catch the other two, said a senior officer of Kolkata Police.

1 killed after speeding Mercedes rams into three

New Delhi

A speeding Mercedes ran over a man and left two others injured in an upscale stretch of Delhi, police said on Sunday. The incident took place shortly after midnight in the Vasant Kunj area near Ambience Mall, where a Mercedes G63 lost control, hit a pole, and then rammed into three people who were waiting at an auto stand. According to the officials, police reached the spot and found all three victims lying injured before rushing them to the hospital. Rohit, 23, a resident of Chamoli in Uttarakhand, was declared brought dead, while the other two men, aged 35 and 23, are still undergoing treatment.

Underground power infrastructure coming up in Amaravati

Amaravati

World-class underground power infrastructure is coming up at a rapid pace in Andhra Pradesh's state capital, Amaravati, state Minister Nara Lokesh said on Sunday. The Minister for Human Resources Development, Information Technology and Real Time Governance stated that Amaravti is rising with top-tier infrastructure. Lokesh took to 'X' to share the video of the ongoing work in Amaravati. A glimpse into Amaravati's world-class underground power infrastructure coming up at a rapid pace. Moving high-tension power lines underground enhances reliability, safety, and the aesthetic appeal of our People's Capital - built for durability and future-readiness. Amaravati is rising with top-tier infrastructure! he posted.

Yadav slams government's move to commercialise Janeshwar Mishra park

Akhilesh Yadav criticised the Uttar Pradesh government for plans to commercialise Lucknow's largest park for private events.

NEW DELHI

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Sunday strongly condemned the Uttar Pradesh government's reported decision to open Lucknow's Janeshwar Mishra Park—touted as Asia's largest urban park—for large-scale private weddings and events starting January 2026. The remarks followed the circulation of a promotional poster for a proposed venue called Janeshwar Greens, which advertises expansive lawns and high-capacity event facilities within the park.

According to the promotional material, the proposed commercial section would cover nearly 3 lakh sq ft of event lawns capable of hosting up to 10,000 guests and accommodating 3,000 vehicles. Yadav argued that such a scale of commercial activity would irreversibly damage the park's ecological balance and diminish its character as a public green space.

The SP leader claimed the project would replace open greenery with post-event waste, noise, pollution and excessive crowding, transforming a vital ecological asset into a profit-driven property. Yadav, who inaugurated the park in 2014 during his tenure as Chief Minister, alleged that the move marked the beginning of what he described as a pattern of greed-driven encroachment on public land by the BJP-led government.

He warned that if the commercialisation proceeded unchecked, it could set a precedent for similar takeovers of community parks across Lucknow and Uttar Pradesh.

In a sharply worded post on X, Yadav urged the people of Lucknow and Uttar Pradesh, including migrants, environmental activists and daily park users, to unite in a collective, non-political campaign to safeguard the city's green spaces. He stressed that residents had a fundamental right to clean air and greenery and called for a robust citizens' movement to resist what he termed an assault on public spaces.

Shaurya Diwas celebrations put on hold in Rajasthan

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan Education Department on Sunday announced that the planned Shaurya Diwas celebrations on December 6 have been put on hold due to ongoing examinations in schools across the state.

According to a statement issued by the office of Education Minister Madan Dilawar, all government and private schools will be conducting examinations on December 5 and 6, making it not feasible to organise any additional activities or events during the examination period. The department added that the previous directive mandating Shaurya Diwas observance has now been officially withdrawn.

Earlier, the Education Department had instructed schools to commemorate December 6 — the date of the Babri Masjid demolition — as Shaurya Diwas through a range of cultural and educational programmes. The directive, issued under the guidance of Education and Panchayati Raj Minister Madan Dilawar, aimed to promote themes of nationalism, patriotism, bravery, cultural heritage and unity among students and school staff.

The circular had recommended that schools conduct essay writing and speech competitions centred on the Ram Mandir movement and Indian cultural values. It further proposed painting and poster-making activities themed around the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, patriotic song recitations, folk dance performances and street plays based on historical or mythological episodes.

Rajasthan's Education Department has postponed Shaurya Divas events, citing statewide school examinations scheduled for early December

Exhibitions displaying literature and photographs related to the Ram Temple construction, along with other historical events described as symbols of Indian bravery, were also suggested as part of the planned activities.

Additionally, the withdrawn directive encouraged mass Surya Namaskar sessions, yoga exercises and a special morning assembly featuring bhajans and aarti dedicated to Lord Ram. Schools were even urged to organise Shaurya Yatras and awareness rallies within their premises, and to invite Army personnel, historians or social workers to address students on nationalism and the Ram Mandir movement.

Kerala's Raj Bhavan to be renamed as 'Lok Bhavan' from today

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The official residence of the Governor will be officially renamed Lok Bhavan on December 1, marking a significant symbolic shift in the state's administrative nomenclature. The move aligns with the Union government's directive to replace colonial-era terms across official institutions.

Governor Rajendra Arlekar, currently in his home state of Goa, is expected to issue the formal notification on Monday. Once notified, the official address will change to Lok Bhavan, Kerala.

The renaming follows a November 25 directive from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), instructing all Raj Bhavans nationwide to adopt the title Lok Bhavan and residences of Lieutenant Governors — traditionally called Raj Niwas — to be renamed Lok Niwas.

Governor Arlekar had first proposed this change during the 2024 Governors' Conference, arguing that the new nomenclature would help bring the Governor's establishment closer to the people. He said the shift symbolises accessibility, transparency, and democratic participation, values that should be reflected in constitutional offices.

Kerala joins a growing list of states implementing the renaming. Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya formalised the transition, becoming one of the first to do so. West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose followed, completing the change in his state as well.

India recorded sharp reductions in HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths between 2010 and 2024, highlighting strong public health progress.

India reports major decline in HIV infections and deaths

NEW DELHI

India has achieved significant progress in its fight against HIV/AIDS, reporting steep declines across key indicators between 2010 and 2024, the government said on Sunday ahead of World AIDS Day 2025. According to official data, the country recorded a 48.7 per cent decline in annual new HIV infections, an 81.4 per cent reduction in AIDS-related deaths and a 74.6 per cent fall in mother-to-child HIV transmission during the period.

The Ministry of Health stated that India continues to demonstrate strong outcomes under the current phase of the National AIDS Control Programme. The country's HIV testing capacity has expanded considerably, rising from 4.13 crore tests in 2020–21 to 6.62 crore in 2024–25. Access to antiretroviral therapy (ART) has also increased, with the number of people living with HIV (PLHIV) on treatment growing from 14.94 lakh to 18.60 lakh. In the same timeframe, viral load testing nearly doubled from 8.90 lakh to 15.98 lakh.

Officials said these improvements surpass global averages and reflect India's leadership in HIV response, backed by sustained domestic investment, data-driven interventions and strong community engagement. The programme's focus on prevention, early detection, treatment expansion and stigma reduction has contributed to long-term positive outcomes.

Health Minister Jagat Prakash Nadda will lead the national-level World AIDS Day observance on Monday at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. Senior government officials will also be present as the event reaffirms the country's commitment to strengthening HIV prevention, treatment, care and efforts to eliminate discrimination against people living with HIV.

The ministry emphasised that continued progress will require deepened collaboration between government agencies, healthcare providers, civil society and affected communities to advance India's goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat.

Woman killed as wall collapses in Kumbakonam

CHENNAI

A 20-year-old woman died after a wall collapsed on her house near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu on Sunday, even as heavy rain continued to lash parts of the state under the impact of Cyclone Ditwah. The victim, Renuka, was the daughter of Muthuveil, a resident of Alamankurichi near Kumbakonam in Thanjavur district.

According to officials, a portion of the wall of Muthuveil's motor shed collapsed due to incessant rainfall and crashed onto the roof of their adjacent house. Renuka died on the spot. Muthuveil, his wife Seetha and their younger daughter Kanimozhi sustained injuries and were admitted to a nearby hospital.

Local authorities have initiated relief measures and are assessing structural safety in the rain-affected neighbourhood.

Meanwhile, the Regional Meteorological Centre (RMC), Chennai, said Cyclone Ditwah, formed over the southwest Bay of Bengal, has started weakening and is expected to downgrade into a deep depression by around 5.30 p.m. on Sunday.

The system is not likely to make landfall along the Tamil Nadu coast, the RMC clarified. According to the latest bulletin, the cyclone is currently located 220 km from Chennai, 130 km from Puducherry, and 120 km from Vedaranyam, moving at a speed of 7 kmph towards the north-northwest.

Even with the weakening trend, the weather office has warned that gale-force winds may blow up to 30 km offshore from the north Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts on Sunday evening.

Extremely heavy rainfall remains a concern for several districts. The highest rainfall in the past 24 hours was recorded at Kodiakkarai (250 mm), indicating the intensity of the system's rain bands over the delta and northern coastal regions.

Unregistered coracle operators risk tourist's safety in Hogenakkal

CHENNAI

Concerns are mounting in Hogenakkal as registered coracle operators warn of a growing influx of unlicensed operators who, they say, are flouting safety regulations and putting tourists at serious risk. They have urged the Dharmapuri district administration to intervene immediately to prevent unregistered individuals from conducting tourism activities on the Cauvery. Hogenakkal has long been a popular tourist destination, but its waters have also seen tragedy.

In 2015, six people lost their lives after a coracle capsized. The incident pushed the administration to enforce strict safety measures, including mandatory registration for coracle operators, designated operation zones and compulsory use of life jackets for all passengers. For several years, these rules ensured safe and organised tourism.

However, in recent months, registered operators said several unlicensed individuals have begun ferrying tourists illegally, often venturing into hazardous stretches of the river.

Registered operators pointed out that there are around 428 licensed coracle operators in Hogenakkal, all of whom are required to follow the safety standards set by the administration. Operating without life jackets or entering restricted areas can lead to immediate cancellation of their registration and penal action.

The operators said they are routinely monitored by the local coracle committees and Block Development Office, ensuring compliance.

However, the unregistered operators are reportedly bypassing all these rules.

According to the registered operators, these unauthorised coracle handlers are inexperienced and often take tourists towards dangerous stretches, including deep and fast-flowing zones near Periyapaani and the Five River convergence area - places known for strong currents and serious accident risk.

They also allegedly overcharge tourists, offering trips beyond the permitted routes such as the Chinnar–Kothikal–Manalmedu circuit, where a standard round-trip for five people is officially capped at Rs 1,500.

71-year-old loses ₹ 1.92 cr to digital arrest scam; 3 arrested

HYDERABAD

In another digital arrest case, Cybercrime Police of Hyderabad have nabbed three fraudsters who extorted Rs 1.92 crore from a senior citizen. A 71-year-old male victim from Hyderabad had approached the police with a complaint stating that he was cheated by cyber fraudsters in the guise of a digital arrest.

The accused, who posed as officers from the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), lured the victim into depositing Rs 1,92,50,070 into various bank accounts between November 7 and 14, a police official said on Sunday.

The fraudsters told the victim that a case had been registered against him for misuse of the Aadhaar card. He was told that using the Aadhaar card, an account was opened in Canara Bank, Mumbai. They made a video call and showed the photo of the Canara bank ATM card, and also sent him a fake FIR of the Crime Branch, Delhi. Later, they demanded money to close the case. Believing them, the victim deposited the amount in the bank accounts provided by them.

After realising that he had been cheated, the victim approached the police. A case was registered at Cybercrime Police Station under sections 66 C, 66 D of the Information Technology Act and the relevant section of the BNS. Police arrested Pandu Vinith Raj, G. Thirupathaiah and Gouni Vishwanatham, all residents of Hyderabad. They were found involved in five cases across the country, out of which two pertain to Telangana.

YOUTH INNOVATION SPIRIT

Gen-Z is the strength of 'Viksit Bharat': PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday highlighted the unwavering determination of India's Gen-Z, calling it the greatest strength of Viksit Bharat. Speaking during the 128th episode of his monthly radio programme Mann Ki Baat, the Prime Minister said that collective effort, confidence and the courage to rise after setbacks are essential qualities that guarantee success even in difficult times.

Modi reflected on the challenges faced by earlier generations, recalling an era when sailors navigated vast oceans without satellites, GPS or modern navigation systems. Imagine that era when there were no satellites, GPS or navigation facilities, even then our sailors would take large ships into the ocean and reach their destinations, he said. He added that while technology has advanced greatly, the core challenge of progress without external support remains relevant today.

The Prime Minister also shared an example from a recent ISRO drone competition that went viral on social media. He said the video captured the innovative spirit and resilience of India's youth, particularly Gen-Z, as they attempted to fly drones in simulated Martian conditions.

In this video, the youth of our country, especially our Gen-Z, were trying to fly drones in conditions similar to those on Mars, he explained. The drones, built without GPS support—since GPS cannot function on Mars—had to operate solely through onboard cameras and software. The small drone had to identify the patterns on the ground, measure altitude, understand obstacles and find a safe landing path on its own, he said.

Modi noted that many of the drones crashed while attempting these tasks, but he emphasised that such failures reflect the spirit of experimentation and learning that drives innovation. According to him, the perseverance shown by the young participants embodies the qualities necessary for India's continued progress in science, technology and nation-building.

QUICK READ

Vadakara DySP suspended over sexual exploitation charge

Thiruvananthapuram
The Kerala Home Department on Sunday placed Vadakara Deputy SP Umesh under suspension after grave allegations of sexual exploitation surfaced against him in a 32-page suicide note left behind by Inspector Binu Thomas (52), the Station House Officer of Cherpulassery Police Station in Palakkad. The government acted a day after State Police Chief Ravada A. Chandrasekhar submitted a special report to the Home Department outlining Umesh's immoral, illegal and undisciplined activities, prompting the immediate suspension order. According to the report, the allegations date back to April 24, 2014, when Binu, then Sub-Inspector and SHO of Wadakkanchery Police Station.

All-party meet 'mere formality' ahead Winter Session: Cong

New Delhi
Congress General Secretary Jairam Ramesh on Sunday termed the all-party meeting convened by the Centre ahead of the Parliament's Winter Session a mere formality, alleging that the Narendra Modi government has already revealed its intentions by listing a subject for short-duration discussion without consulting the Opposition. The all-party meeting, held here a day before the session begins on Monday, saw Opposition leaders flag issues ranging from electoral roll revisions and the recent blast in Delhi to unemployment, inflation, federalism and law-and-order concerns in several states.

Nagaland all set for 26th 'Hornbill Festival'

Kohima
Nagaland is fully geared up for the 26th edition of the iconic 'Hornbill Festival', beginning Monday, with elaborate preparations in place at the Naga Heritage Village in Kisama, around 12 km south of the state capital Kohima. The 10-day festival, coinciding with Nagaland's Statehood Day, will be celebrated from December 1 to 10. This year's 'Hornbill Festival' will also see the participation of six Partner Countries - the UK, France, Austria, Switzerland, Malta and Ireland, while Arunachal Pradesh will participate as the Partner State.

India–UK joint military exercise AJEYA WARRIOR-25 concludes

India and the United Kingdom completed their joint military drill in Rajasthan, strengthening interoperability and shared counter-terror capabilities.

NEW DELHI

The eighth edition of the India–UK Joint Military Exercise AJEYA WARRIOR-25 concluded on Sunday at the Mahajan Field Firing Ranges in Rajasthan, marking the end of a two-week training programme centred on counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban environments under a United Nations mandate. A total of 240 personnel from the two nations took part in this bilateral exercise, which began on November 17.

Troops from the Indian Army's Sikh Regiment and the UK Army's Royal Gurkha Rifles participated in an extensive set of drills designed to simulate real-world operational challenges. These included joint tactical manoeuvres, combat conditioning, heliborne insertion missions, room-intervention procedures, and cordon-and-search operations. The contingents also engaged in joint planning sessions and operational discussions aimed at improving coordination and decision-making in complex scenarios.

The validation phase of the exercise highlighted the high degree of interoperability and precision attained by both forces. Senior officials noted that the level of jointmanship demonstrated during the drills reflected the deepening military cooperation between India and the UK. The closing ceremony featured cultural performances and honoured exceptional soldiers, underscoring the camaraderie developed over the course of the exercise.

An equipment display showcasing indigenous weapon systems developed under the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat initiative was also organised as part of the concluding events. British High Commission's Defence Adviser, Commodore Chris Saunders, had earlier stated that the exercise would help soldiers from the Royal Gurkha Rifles and the Sikh Regiment strengthen professional ties and exchange best practices through simulated combat scenarios.

The 2025 edition builds upon the legacy of previous iterations, reinforcing the mutual trust and shared strategic vision between the two nations. Beyond operational training, AJEYA WARRIOR-25 served as a platform for cultural understanding and defence diplomacy, further solidifying the longstanding military partnership.

UP launches 'Bijli Bill Rahat Yojana' to ease electricity burden

LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh rolls out a major electricity relief scheme offering waivers and rebates to support domestic and commercial consumers statewide.

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the 'Bijli Bill Rahat Yojana', a first-of-its-kind electricity relief initiative set to take effect from today (December 1). The scheme aims to bring substantial relief to lakhs of electricity consumers by offering a 100 per cent interest and surcharge waiver, along with a rebate on outstanding power bills.

The initiative is designed to benefit a wide range of consumers, including ordinary households, small-scale electricity users, and commercial operators. Under the scheme, consumers can avail the benefits from December 1, 2025, to February 28, 2026. Alongside the complete waiver on interest and surcharges, a 25 per cent rebate on the principal amount has also been announced. Special provisions will apply to small domestic consumers with connections up to two kilowatts and commercial users with connections up to one kilowatt.

UPPCL Chairman Dr. Ashish Kumar Goyal, during a review meeting, emphasised that the scheme reflects the government's commitment to prioritising public welfare. He added that the inclusion of easy instalment options and automatic adjustments of inflated bills based on average consumption will offer meaningful financial relief to consumers struggling with overdue payments.

The scheme is expected to be a major support for those previously entangled in cases of unauthorised electricity usage. It will also help settle ongoing litigation, easing legal burdens for affected families.

To access the benefits, consumers must register on the official portal, either online or by visiting their local electricity division office. The government has initiated a widespread awareness campaign involving notices, pamphlets, information letters, and camps across rural and urban regions to ensure maximum participation.

The scheme is poised to help poor households, small shopkeepers, farmers, and rural consumers who often face difficulties in clearing electricity dues.

Four killed as two SUVs collide near Bhopal

BHOPAL

Four persons died, and one was critically injured in a head-on collision between two SUVs on the Bhopal-Vidisha highway in the Bairasia police station area, around 60 km from the Madhya Pradesh capital, on Sunday. Police officials described a scene of utter chaos, with the vehicles mangled beyond recognition and debris scattered across the road.

The victims, all travelling in one SUV, were en route back to their homes in Sheopur after a day in the state capital. Bairasia police officials said the victims have been identified as Anees Sahab, Khalid Bhai, Sajid Bhai and Naved Bhai, all residents of Sheopur.

The names were verified through family contacts and local records following the incident. The sole survivor, Rafaqat Gauri, sustained severe injuries; he remains in intensive care at Barasia hospital, where doctors described his condition as critical but stable.

Preliminary investigations pointed to high speed and possibly poor visibility due to patchy fog as contributing factors, though a full probe is underway to rule out mechanical failure or driver error.

All of them came to Bhopal to attend Maulana Mahmood Madani's discourse. After attending the event, they were returning to Sheopur in their car. They met with the accident at the Barasia-Nazirabad road, 60 km away from Bhopal. The vehicles were travelling in opposite directions when the incident occurred. We have seized both SUVs for forensic examination, and a case of rash and negligent driving has been registered under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Sen told reporters.

A CBI court in Lucknow has jailed two ex-BSNL officials for their roles in a major ISD fraud.

2 ex-BSNL engineers sentenced to 2 yrs in ₹88 lakh fraud case

LUCKNOW

A Special CBI Court in Lucknow has sentenced two former Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) officials to two years' imprisonment for their involvement in an ₹88 lakh International Subscriber Dialling (ISD) fraud case, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said on Sunday. The court also imposed a fine of ₹10 lakh each on the convicted officials — Hari Ram Shukla and Gulab Chand Chaurasia — both of whom served as Sub-Divisional Engineers (SDE), Group Exchange, BSNL, in Gorakhpur.

A third accused, Siyaram Agrahari, who worked as a Junior Telecom Officer at BSNL, Gorakhpur, was acquitted of all charges due to lack of evidence, the CBI confirmed.

The fraud dates back to 2003–2004, when Shukla, Chaurasia, and other co-conspirators allegedly facilitated unauthorised international calling services. The CBI registered the case on September 18, 2008, following complaints of misuse of BSNL's international calling network.

According to investigators, the accused officials had allegedly colluded with six Public Call Office (PCO) owners and 18 telephone subscribers to enable illegal international calls.

Instead of routing these ISD calls through the designated Bansgaon Telephone Exchange, the conspirators diverted them directly through the Trunk Automatic Exchange (TAX). This bypass allowed the calls to go unmetered, resulting in a wrongful loss of ₹88.42 lakh to the state-run telecom company.

After a detailed investigation, the CBI filed a chargesheet on May 1, 2010, naming the three BSNL officials as key accused in the conspiracy. The agency reiterated that the manipulation of call routing and the deliberate evasion of billing mechanisms formed the core of the telecom fraud.

The Court, after trial, convicted and sentenced the two accused accordingly. The Trial Court has acquitted Siyaram Agrahari of all the charges levelled against him, the CBI said in an official statement.

The verdict brings closure to a nearly two-decade-old case involving systemic misuse of telecom infrastructure and highlights the CBI's sustained action against corruption within public sector undertakings.

CM's 'Swagat Online' clears road-bridge project

AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government's widely appreciated 'Swagat Online' programme continues to deliver solutions to long-pending grassroots issues, with Porbandar's small Moddar village emerging as the latest example of its impact. Moddar, a village of around 1,200 people near Kutiyana, has been struggling for years without a proper road and bridge to access the nearby town.

When villagers raised the issue before Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel during the Swagat programme, the response was swift and decisive. The CM heard the delegation patiently, acknowledged that their demand was genuine, and sanctioned Rs 9 crore for the construction of a minor bridge, culverts and a three-kilometre road connecting Moddar to Passavari.

The speed of action left villagers emotional and grateful. We met the Chief Minister, and by the fourth day itself, we received a call from his office saying the issue had been resolved. Even the funds were sanctioned immediately. For a small village like ours, this means everything, said farmer Laxman Moddedra.

For decades, villagers have travelled nearly 20 kilometres via longer routes to reach Kutiyana, despite the riverbank being just across from their fields and homes. Over 100 farmers cultivate land on the opposite side of the river and often have to wade through water or cross with livestock, risking their safety. Sometimes people used inflated tubes to cross; there was always a fear of drowning, Laxmanbhai said. In the Ghed region, where the village lies, the river remains flooded for eight months a year, cutting off access entirely.

37 Maoists, including 12 women, surrender in Chhattisgarh

DANTEWADA

In one of the largest Maoist surrenders in Dantewada, Chhattisgarh, 37 Maoists, including 27 with rewards totaling Rs 65 lakh, renounced violence under the Lon Varratu and Poona Margem (Revival through Rehabilitation) programme, officials said on Sunday. The cadres credited their decision to the state government's Poona Margem policy, expressing faith in its promise of rehabilitation and social reintegration.

The initiative, conducted under the direct supervision of senior Chhattisgarh Police and CRPF officers, has gained acceptance among cadres weary of life in the jungles. Authorities emphasized that the Centre, state govt, Dantewada Police, local administration, and CRPF remain committed to establishing peace, ensuring rehabilitation, and promoting inclusive development in the region.

Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, Sundarraj Pattilingam, described the Poona Margem and Lon Varratu initiatives as transformative for lasting peace, dignity, and progress in Bastar. The 37 cadres surrendered in the presence of senior officials, including DIG Dantewada Range Kamalochan Kashyap, DIG CRPF Rakesh Chaudhary, SP Dantewada Gaurav Rai, and other CRPF and police commandants at the DRG office in Dantewada.

BJP GEARS UP

BJP steps up 2026 Assembly poll strategy in TN

CHENNAI

With the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections drawing closer, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has intensified its groundwork across the state, signalling a focused push to strengthen the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). BJP State Secretary and former Yuva Morcha president Vinoj P. Selvam said the party's organisational network is now fully activated and systematically working toward securing an NDA victory.

According to him, BJP State President Nainar Nagenthran has already appointed incharges, conveners and co-conveners for each Assembly constituency. This mobilisation follows a major internal restructuring, including the appointment of new district presidents, office-bearers and leaders across various morchas and cells, aimed at energising grassroots engagement.

Commenting on potential new entrants to the NDA, Selvam said that Tamil Nadu's political environment remains fluid, with several parties evaluating alliance strategies. We still have four to five months before elections. Politics is full of surprises till the last minute. When parties that want to defeat the DMK begin focusing on strategy and alliances, new alignments can definitely emerge, he noted.

On seat-sharing discussions and electoral goals, he said that the number of seats the BJP will contest will be finalised following consultations between the BJP's election working committee and the AIADMK's leadership. While declining to speculate on exact numbers, he emphasised that the BJP aims to win every seat it contests.

Outlining the party's campaign themes, Selvam said the BJP and the NDA plan to highlight what they describe as the failures and shortcomings of the ruling DMK government. He asserted that the upcoming election should mark the end of the DMK's rule, accusing the party of corruption and dynastic tendencies. According to Selvam, allowing such a government to consolidate power further would be dangerous for democracy.

983 caught for drunken driving in Hyderabad

HYDERABAD

As many as 983 people have been caught for driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol during the special weekend drive in the limits of Hyderabad and Cyberabad Police Commissionerates, police said on Sunday. While 552 drivers were apprehended during the two-day drive in Hyderabad, the Cyberabad traffic police caught 431 offenders.

Hyderabad traffic police conducted a two-day special drive on November 28 and 29 against drunken driving to ensure road safety. During the special drive, a total of 552 drivers were caught driving vehicles under the influence of alcohol. Of them, 438 were two-wheeler riders, 45 were three-wheeler drivers, and 69 were four-wheeler and other vehicle drivers.

Offenders were categorised based on their Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) levels. A total of 127 offenders had BAC levels ranging from 35 mg/100 ml to 50 mg/100 ml. The police registered 212 cases for BAC levels ranging from 51 to 100, 112 cases for 101-150 and 64 cases for BAC levels ranging from 151-200.

Nineteen offenders were found to have BAC levels ranging from 201 to 250, eight had BAC levels of 251-300 and 10 others were booked for BAC levels above 300. Police said there will be zero tolerance for drunk driving violations, and this special drive will continue.

Cyberabad traffic police conducted a special drunk driving enforcement drive over the weekend, resulting in the apprehension of 431 offenders. A total of 325 offenders were riding two-wheelers. Sixteen were three-wheeler drivers. Police said 86 violators were driving four-wheelers. Four others were driving heavy vehicles.

QUICK READ

INS Sahyadri crew holds yoga session with Philippine Navy

Manila

The crew of Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri on Sunday conducted out a joint yoga session with Philippine Navy personnel at Manila. In a statement shared on X, Indian Navy Spokesperson stated, The crew of INS Sahyadri, during port call at Manila, Philippines, conducted a joint Yoga session with Philippine Navy personnel, promoting health, mindfulness and reflecting India's message Wellness, Unity and Harmony. On November 27, INS Sahyadri made a port call at Manila as part of the ship's deployment to the Indo-Pacific. INS Sahyadri arrived in Manila to a warm reception, following a successful Passage Exercise (PASSEX) conducted with the Philippine Navy.

At least 4 killed, 10 injured in shooting in California

Washington

At least four people were killed, and 10 others were injured in a shooting during a family gathering in Stockton city of US' California, local media reported citing authorities. peaking to reporters, San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office spokesperson Heather Brent said that the shooting took place at a banquet hall along the 1900 block of Lucile AvenueShe stated that victims include juveniles and adults as they were attending a child's birthday party, CBS News reported. The suspected shooter has not been caught. San Joaquin County Sheriff's Office said that an investigation is being conducted.

6K Afghan refugees deported from Pak and Iran in one day

Over six thousand Afghan refugees were deported in one day, worsening humanitarian concerns as winter approaches in Afghanistan

KABUL

More than 6,000 Afghan refugees were forcibly repatriated from Pakistan and Iran in a single day, a Taliban official confirmed on Sunday, according to local media reports.

Sharing details from the High Commission for Addressing Migrants' Issues on X, Taliban Deputy Spokesperson Hamdullah Fitrat said that 1,188 families — a total of 6,553 individuals — returned to Afghanistan. The deported refugees entered through multiple border points including Torkham in Nangarhar, Pul-i-Abresham in Nimroz, Spin Boldak in Kandahar, Bahramcha in Helmand and the Islam Qala crossing in Herat, Pajhwok Afghan News reported.

Fitrat added that 1,260 families, comprising 8,102 people, were transferred to their home provinces, while 780 families received humanitarian aid upon arrival. Telecommunication companies also distributed 1,294 SIM cards to refugees deported from Pakistan and Iran to help them stay connected with relatives.

On Friday alone, nearly 1,332 Afghan nationals were forcibly sent back from the two neighbouring countries, highlighting a sharp rise in repatriations.

However, many newly returned migrants say they are struggling with dire conditions as winter nears. Several families told local media earlier this week that they lack basic necessities, including shelter, warm clothing and food supplies. They also raised concerns over challenges in obtaining electronic ID cards (tazkira), which are essential for accessing government services and aid.

Our main problem is that we have no shelter. When we return to the country, we don't know where to go. We ask the Islamic Emirate to address our situation, said Abdul Baqi, a recent returnee from Pakistan.

Others echoed similar distress. Abdul Bari said, Everyone knows most people are homeless, spending their days in the streets and along the roads. Another returnee, Abdul Malik, urged authorities to expedite the issuance of electronic ID cards to ease their reintegration.

Prez to deliver special address marking 1-yr since Martial Law crisis

President Lee Jae Myung will address the nation this week, highlighting public resilience during last year's brief martial law

SEOUL

South Korean President Lee Jae Myung will deliver a special national address later this week to commemorate the first anniversary of former President Yoon Suk Yeol's brief martial law declaration, the presidential office announced on Sunday. The speech, scheduled for Wednesday, will emphasize the decisive role citizens played in restoring democratic order during the unexpected political upheaval.

Presidential Secretary for Communication and Public Relations, Lee Kyu-yeon, said the address will celebrate the people's efforts in transforming a moment of extreme chaos into peace through widespread public rallies. Following the speech, President Lee will participate in a press conference with around 80 foreign journalists under the theme A Renewed Democracy: One Year On, Yonhap News Agency reported.

According to the secretary, President Lee will use the opportunity to reaffirm South Korea's democratic restoration before the international community and deliver a message centered on national unity and political healing.

In addition to the formal address, Lee will host a luncheon with leaders representing the three branches of government — National Assembly Speaker Woo Won-shik, Supreme Court Chief Justice Cho Hee-dae, Constitutional Court Chief Kim Sang-hwan, Prime Minister Kim Min-seok, and National Election Commission Chair Roh Tae-ak. The gathering will reflect on the historical significance of last year's martial law and outline long-term democratic priorities.

The martial law crisis erupted on the night of December 3 last year when former President Yoon declared emergency rule in a televised address, alleging that the opposition was obstructing state functions and that drastic measures were required to counter pro-North Korea elements and protect the constitutional system. The declaration triggered an immediate public response.

Mourners flock to site of deadly HK blaze

HONG KONG

More than a thousand people turned out on Sunday to pay tribute to the victims of Hong Kong's deadliest fire in more than 75 years, as Beijing warned it would use a national security law to crack down on any anti-China protest in the wake of the blaze. The cause of the blaze at a high-rise apartment complex, remains under investigation, amid public anger over missed fire risk warnings and evidence of unsafe construction practices.

Police said on Sunday evening the confirmed death toll had risen to 146 after they completed a sweep of five of the burnt out towers. Some bodies had been found in stairwells and on rooftops where residents had tried to flee. More than 40 people are still considered to be missing in the fire, police said.

Mourners queued for more than a kilometre along the banks of a canal near the burnt-out Wang Fuk Court housing complex to lay white flowers for those who died. Some attached notes addressed to the victims.

The smell of smoke still hung in the air four full days after the fast-moving blaze fanned across the exterior of seven residential towers under renovation in Hong Kong's northern Tai Po district.

Joey Yeung, 28, whose grandmother's apartment burned in the fire, said she had come with her family with a sense of mourning for the victims and anger at those responsible.

I can't accept it. So today I came with my father and my family to lay flowers, Yeung told Reuters. I'm not asking to get anything back but at least give some justice to the families of the deceased - to those who are still alive.

Seven Indonesian domestic workers and one Filipino helper have been confirmed among the dead and dozens of migrant workers remain missing. An outdoor prayer meeting in central Hong Kong for the city's Filipino community was attended by hundreds on Sunday morning.

India's NDRF teams have expanded rescue operations in Sri Lanka as Cyclone Ditwah's devastation deepens across the island nation

India intensifies relief efforts in SL under 'Operation Sagar Bandhu'

COLOMBO

Under Operation Sagar Bandhu, India's National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has stepped up relief and rescue efforts in Sri Lanka as the country continues to battle severe weather triggered by Cyclone Ditwah. The island nation has been hit by relentless rain, flash floods and landslides, prompting widespread devastation.

Sharing images of ongoing operations on X, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said, NDRF personnel, in close coordination with local authorities, continue to undertake relief operations in Sri Lanka. Operation Sagar Bandhu.

According to Sri Lanka's Disaster Management Centre (DMC), the death toll resulting from the cyclone-induced weather system has climbed to 153, while at least 191 people remain missing. Rescue and recovery efforts are still underway, supported by local and international teams.

India dispatched two specialised NDRF teams to Sri Lanka to strengthen the ongoing operations. The contingent — consisting of 80 trained rescuers and four search-and-rescue canines — departed from the Hindon Airbase aboard an Indian Air Force IL-76 aircraft. The mission is being led by Commandant P.K. Tiwary of the 8th Battalion.

An official statement from NDRF Headquarters said the teams are equipped with inflatable rescue boats, hydraulic cutting and breaching equipment, advanced communication systems, medical kits and other essential humanitarian supplies necessary for large-scale evacuations. Their deployment aims to bolster Sri Lanka's capacity to manage search, rescue and relief efforts in heavily affected areas.

Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force has stationed Mi-17 V5 helicopters in Colombo to ensure swift Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) response. IAF transport aircraft have also been designated for large-scale evacuation of Indian nationals, with multiple missions planned from Trivandrum and Hindan.

S. Korea faces lingering post-crisis economic strain

SEOUL

South Korea continues to stand at a critical economic crossroads a year after an unexpected martial law bid tarnished Asia's fourth-largest economy that took decades to build, as emergency measures that helped navigate an ensuing crisis and changes in the global trade environment may begin to take a toll, experts said on Sunday. After months of political turmoil triggered by former President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law declaration last December and his eventual removal from office in April, the country is beginning to show signs of recovery.

Thousands march in Philippines, demanding Marcos resignation

MANILA

Tens of thousands of people marched in Manila demanding the resignation of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr over a corruption scandal involving massive overspending and alleged bribes in flood-control infrastructure projects.

The rally, organised by the People's Movement Against Corruption (KBKK), began at Luneta National Park and moved toward the presidential palace. Protesters carried an effigy of Marcos and Vice President Sara Duterte depicted as "corrupt-codiles," and held signs calling for accountability. Organisers estimated the crowd at more than 20,000.

Public anger has intensified after two powerful typhoons caused extensive damage and killed more than 250 people, raising questions about missing or defective flood-control works.

Two cabinet ministers have resigned, and former lawmaker Zaldy Co has accused Marcos of directing an additional $1.7bn in dubious budget allocations, allegations the president denies.

Prime Minister Netanyahu writes to Israeli president requesting pardon

TEL AVIV

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has formally requested a presidential pardon from President Isaac Herzog as he faces long-running corruption cases. Herzog's office acknowledged the request as extraordinary and said it will be evaluated carefully after reviewing all relevant legal opinions. Netanyahu has been on trial since 2019 in three separate cases involving allegations of bribery, fraud, and breach of trust, all of which he denies.

The request comes amid pressure from former U.S. President Donald Trump, who has urged Herzog multiple times to pardon Netanyahu. Trump reportedly sent a letter in November and had also publicly called for a pardon during a visit to Israel in October.

Netanyahu is also wanted by the International Criminal Court, which issued arrest warrants in November 2024 for him and former Defence Minister Yoav Gallant over alleged war crimes in Gaza. Despite the ceremonial nature of the Israeli presidency, Herzog retains the authority to issue pardons under exceptional circumstances.

SU DO KU

Brain-Bender: Can You Solve It?

9		3	1		8	5		2
1			4	3			9	
4	2		6		5	1		
5		9		1	3		6	
	1		5	4		7		
3	4		7		6	9		1
	5	6		2		3		9
	3		9		1	2		6
2		1		6	7		8	

4	3	7	9	8	6	1	2	5
5	1	9	4	7	2	3	8	6
6	2	8	1	5	3	9	4	7
8	9	3	6	2	5	7	1	4
1	5	6	7	3	4	8	9	2
2	7	4	8	9	1	6	5	3
9	6	2	5	1	7	4	3	8
3	4	1	2	6	8	5	7	9
7	8	5	3	4	9	2	6	1

Solutions to Yesterday's puzzle

Fill a 9×9 grid with numbers so that each row, column and 3×3 section contain all of the digits between 1 and 9.

HEALTH ASSISTANTS STRIKE

B'desh health assistants continue indefinite strike

DHAKA

Health assistants across Bangladesh continued their indefinite work stoppage on Sunday as part of their ongoing push to fulfil a six-point demand, including the upgrade of their entry-level positions to the 14th grade, according to local media reports.

Fazlul Haque Chowdhury, member secretary of the Bangladesh Health Assistant Association Central Coordination Council (BHAA), said that thousands of health assistants began a sit-in protest at Dhaka's Central Shaheed Minar and stayed through the night. He confirmed that an 11-member delegation had left for the Secretariat to hold talks with the interim government.

Despite the scheduled meeting, Chowdhury reiterated that the protest would not end without a formal government order addressing their primary demand. But we will not withdraw our program unless the government issues a GO upgrading our entry post from 16th grade to 14th grade, he said.

The association had previously warned that a nationwide work stoppage would begin if the government failed to meet their demands by November 28. Their six-point charter includes calls to amend recruitment regulations, eliminate salary disparities and grant technical status to health assistants.

Tensions between health assistants and authorities have been ongoing since October 1, when they launched a strike over the same demands. A temporary suspension was announced on October 6 after a meeting with the chief of the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) in Mohakhali, allowing the crucial typhoid vaccination campaign to proceed as planned on October 12.

Speaking to bdNews24 at the time, Chowdhury confirmed that only vaccination-related duties would resume, while all other activities would remain paused until October 30. He warned that the strike would resume thereafter if authorities failed to show visible progress in addressing their concerns.

QUICK READ

South Korea faces slow, uncertain recovery after turmoil

Seoul

South Korea remains at a difficult economic turning point one year after the failed martial law attempt that shook the nation. The December 2024 move caused panic in markets, sending the won falling and pushing the KOSPI toward 2,300. Consumption also dropped as confidence weakened. Extra U.S. tariffs added more pressure, leading to a GDP fall early this year. Forecasts were cut sharply. With President Lee Jae Myung in office, recovery has begun through support programs and cash coupons. Exports, especially semiconductors, have grown again, helping markets rebound. Still, experts warn that uncertainty and structural challenges remain.

Wakefit readies for December IPO launch

New Delhi

Wakefit Innovations, the Bengaluru-based home and furnishings brand, will open its first public share sale on December 8. The IPO will close on December 10, with anchor investors getting shares on December 5, as stated in the red herring prospectus. The company plans to raise ₹377 crore through a fresh issue of shares, while existing shareholders will sell 4.67 crore shares under the offer-for-sale. This marks Wakefit's debut in the stock market as it seeks funds to support its expansion plans. Investors are expected to show strong interest in the growing home and lifestyle sector.

Cement sector eyes stronger growth ahead

New Delhi

Major cement companies are optimistic after seeing solid sales in the July–September quarter. Firms like UltraTech, Ambuja, Shree Cement, Dalmia Bharat and Nuvoco Vistas reported revenue growth of up to 18%, driven by better prices and lower costs. With coal prices easing and diesel rates staying stable, companies expect the second half of FY26 to be even better. They believe demand will rise as more people build homes in cities and villages. A good monsoon, along with recent tax incentives and GST reforms, is also boosting confidence for stronger growth ahead.

New labour codes strengthen India's export growth

The National Floor Wage sets a uniform minimum, aids labour cost planning, and digital payments improve transparency and global compliance for exporters

NEW DELHI

India's newly notified Labour Codes are being seen as a strong support system for the country's export-driven industries. Sectors such as textiles, garments, leather, electronics, gems and jewellery, pharmaceuticals, auto components, and IT-enabled services are expected to benefit greatly. The government has combined 29 older labour laws into four simpler Codes, making it easier for industries to follow rules while also protecting workers' rights.

A major improvement is the introduction of one standard meaning for "wages." Earlier, different laws used different definitions, which caused confusion for companies working across states. With a uniform definition now in place, payroll calculations for social security, bonus, and gratuity become easier and clearer.

The National Floor Wage brings another big change. It sets a minimum benchmark that no state can go below, helping companies plan their labour costs without worrying about regional differences. Digital wage payments have also been encouraged, making employee payments more transparent and allowing exporters to maintain clear records for global audits.

The Codes also ban gender-based discrimination in hiring and salaries, bringing Indian practices closer to international standards. Fixed-term employment has been recognised, allowing companies to hire for specific periods during peak demand while still giving workers all legal benefits. This is crucial for industries that face changing global order cycles.

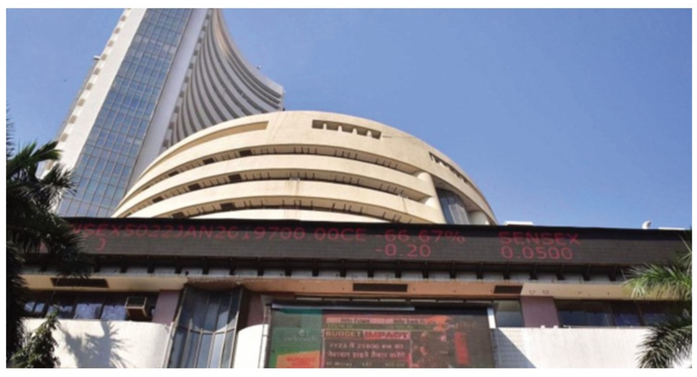
The threshold for government approval for layoffs, retrenchment, or closures has been raised from 100 to 300 workers, giving firms more flexibility during market ups and downs. Simplified compliance, single registrations, unified returns, and digital record-keeping further reduce administrative burdens.

With inspector-cum-facilitators, random digital inspections, third-party audits, and the option to settle minor offences quickly, the Labour Codes aim to build a smoother, more supportive environment for India's export sector.

Key events include the RBI policy meeting for inflation and liquidity cues, and November auto sales data, potentially boosting confidence in consumption recovery

Key economic events set to shape markets

MUMBAI



The Indian stock market is preparing for a busy and important week as it steps into the final month of 2025. Investors will be closely watching several key factors, including the Reserve Bank of India's upcoming monetary policy meeting, monthly automobile sales data, and major economic indicators from the United States. While strong domestic fundamentals and steady global cues may support the market, uncertainties around interest rates and global inflation could keep traders cautious.

On Friday, November 28, the benchmark indices closed nearly flat as investors booked profits and waited for India's Q2 GDP numbers. The Sensex slipped 14 points to settle at 85,706.67, while the Nifty fell 13 points to close at 26,202.95. Market experts said the index continues to hit fresh highs and maintains a positive trend. They expect the next resistance levels at 26,500 and 27,000. On the downside, they identified support at the 20-day exponential moving average near 25,900, followed by 25,700.

The most important event for the coming week will be the RBI Monetary Policy Committee meeting scheduled from December 3 to 5. Investors will be looking for guidance on inflation, liquidity conditions, and the broader economic outlook as the year nears its end. Another major trigger will be the release of November auto sales data on December 1. Strong performance across vehicle categories could boost confidence in India's consumption recovery.

Global factors will also influence market sentiment. Wall Street will have a full trading week, and US data flow will pick up as federal agencies resume reporting. Investors will watch for the delayed September readings of the PCE and Core PCE inflation index on Friday. The ADP payroll report for November, due Wednesday, will also be tracked closely. Meanwhile, India's trade talks with the US continue to progress, with expectations of a deal by year-end.

UPI transactions record strong November growth nationwide

NEW DELHI

Digital payments in India continued to rise strongly in November 2025, with the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) crossing more than 19 billion transactions worth Rs 24.58 lakh crore by November 28, according to new data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI). This shows clear year-on-year growth compared to November 2024, when UPI logged 15.48 billion transactions valued at Rs 21.55 lakh crore. The steady rise highlights how deeply digital payments have become a part of daily life in India.

The latest data shows that UPI's transaction volume in November 2025 grew by about 23 per cent from last year, while the overall value increased by nearly 14 per cent. Looking back further, the growth is even more striking. Compared to November 2023, UPI transactions have risen almost 70 per cent in volume and more than 41 per cent in value within just two years.

NPCI figures also reveal a strong five-year trend. In November 2021, UPI recorded only 4.18 billion transactions worth Rs 7.68 lakh crore. By November 2022, the numbers had nearly doubled. Since then, UPI has shown consistent and sharp upward movement, reflecting India's rapid shift from cash to digital payments. Between 2021 and 2025, UPI's transaction volume has grown over four times, with total transaction value rising more than three times. This makes UPI a central pillar of India's digital payment system.

For the financial year 2025–26 so far, UPI has processed 12.41 billion transactions. The average daily volume stands at 689.60 million, and the average daily value is Rs 91,324.77 crore. In the same period of 2024–25, daily averages were lower at 516.07 million transactions and Rs 71,839.58 crore. Rising smartphone use, simple payment apps, and widespread QR code acceptance have all contributed to UPI's strong and steady growth.

Exchanges fine MTNL over board lapses

NEW DELHI

State-owned telecom company MTNL has been fined ₹5.42 lakh by NSE and BSE for failing to comply with board composition rules, specifically not appointing the required number of independent directors under SEBI regulations. In a filing, MTNL said it received notices on November 28, with the penalty including ₹4.6 lakh plus ₹82,800 GST. The company needs four more independent directors. As a public sector unit, board appointments are handled by the Department of Telecommunications, which appointed two earlier this year. MTNL has requested the Centre to expedite the remaining appointments and sought a waiver of fines.

Banks boost credit support across Jammu & Kashmir

JAMMU

Officials said UT banks disbursed ₹43,017 crore by September; Dulloo urged continued priority-sector lending, stressing agriculture's growth potential and the need to support farmers despite recent challenges

Over 10.07 lakh people in Jammu and Kashmir received credit support in the first half of the 2025–26 financial year, with banks giving loans worth more than Rs 43,000 crore. The update was shared during the 17th UT-Level Bankers' Committee meeting, chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo in Jammu. The meeting reviewed how banks and financial institutions performed in giving loans and services during the first quarter and first half of the year.

Officials said banks in the UT disbursed Rs 43,017 crore to beneficiaries between April and September. Dulloo noted that despite difficult months marked by the Pahalgam terror attack, cross-border tensions, and floods, lending to the priority sector stayed on track. He said agriculture continues to be a major chance for growth, and banks must support farmers with suitable loans to help the UT's economy grow stronger.

The chief secretary urged banks to offer easy and quick loans under schemes such as the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), PM Vishwakarma, Mission YUVA, and Homestays. These schemes aim to create more self-employment options for young people. He also said the Credit-Deposit (CD) Ratio of the UT needs improvement, and banks should increase credit to Self-Help Groups.

Dulloo stressed improving lending in key priority areas like agriculture, housing, education, and social infrastructure. He asked banks, especially private ones, to expand their presence in unbanked and under-banked areas so that people everywhere can access basic banking services. He further directed banks to improve enrolment in social security schemes such as the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, and the Atal Pension Yojana, while ensuring quick settlement of claims under these programmes.

Mumbai property market sees record November growth

MUMBAI

Mumbai's property market delivered its strongest November performance since 2013, showing rising homebuyer interest and steady confidence across the city. A new report revealed that the Mumbai region, covering areas under the BMC, registered 12,219 property deals in November 2025. This marks a strong 20 per cent jump compared to the same month last year, highlighting the city's continued real estate momentum.

Stamp duty collections also reflected this positive trend. The state earned Rs 1,038 crore from stamp duty in November, showing a 12 per cent rise year-on-year. Month-on-month, registrations went up by 5 per cent, while stamp duty revenue stayed stable. Between January and November 2025, Mumbai recorded 1,35,807 registrations, contributing more than Rs 12,224 crore to the state. This period saw a 5 per cent rise in registrations and an 11 per cent revenue increase, further proving the city's active real estate landscape.

Knight Frank India Chairman and Managing Director Shishir Baijal said the steady performance reflects strong and mature demand. He noted that buyers across different price groups continue to remain active, with a clear rise in demand for higher-value homes. With more than 1.35 lakh registrations in eleven months, Baijal said Mumbai's market now operates at a higher, more stable level than before.

Demand for premium homes surged in November. Properties priced above Rs 5 crore made up 7 per cent of total registrations, up from 5 per cent last year. Homes priced below Rs 1 crore saw a decline due to affordability challenges. The mid-range segment of Rs 2–5 crore stayed stable, while homes priced between Rs 1 crore and Rs 2 crore rose from 31 per cent in 2024 to 33 per cent in 2025, showing shifting buyer preferences.

CII calls for strong, unified push toward green transition

NEW DELHI

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has urged India to pursue a holistic green transition by strengthening green finance, improving recycling systems, and simplifying environmental approvals. CII said this shift is essential as India advances toward becoming a USD 5 trillion economy. Director General Chandrajit Banerjee stressed that a green transition is now a strategic necessity for sustained growth, global competitiveness, and climate goals.

CII's recommendations emphasise transition finance, circularity, and stronger ESG reporting. Banerjee noted that India will need nearly USD 1 trillion in green investments over the next 10–15 years and about USD 10 trillion by 2070 to achieve net-zero emissions, while only a fraction of this is currently available. To bridge the gap, he proposed creating a Green Finance Institution in GIFT City to attract low-cost global capital through concessional loans, equity support, and guarantees.

CII also suggested a Green Tech Expo Fund, mandatory recycling rules, Circular Economy Parks, and a unified digital environmental clearance authority to accelerate approvals and support energy-efficient buildings.

TOY INDUSTRY TRANSFORMATION

India pushes forward strong electronic toy ecosystem

NEW DELHI

India is moving quickly toward building a strong, inclusive, and homegrown electronic toy industry, with the government highlighting the crucial role of electronics and IT in this journey. According to Amitesh Kumar Sinha, Additional Secretary at MeitY, the key foundations for this industry are already taking shape, and young engineers are actively contributing to its growth.

India's toy sector, once heavily dependent on imports, is now manufacturing locally and exporting toys to 153 countries. To support this progress, MeitY, C-DAC, Indian Toy Industries, and the LEGO Group jointly celebrated the convocation of the second batch of engineering graduates trained under a special year-long project. These graduates were part of the programme titled 'Development of Electronics and IT-based Control and Automation Solutions for Consumer Electronic Goods (Toy Industry)'. The initiative focuses on building prototypes and strengthening the skills of young engineers, especially those from under-represented communities.

During the event, Sinha inaugurated the new Electronic Toys Lab at C-DAC Noida. He said the programme has strong potential to grow and reach more students, creating a larger impact on the toy industry. He also noted that the Centre of Excellence at C-DAC Noida will collaborate with NIELIT, MSH, and other institutes to support innovation and encourage start-ups in the electronic toy sector.

Under this initiative, engineers from SC, ST, and North-Eastern backgrounds were selected from across India and trained for one year. The first six months were spent at the e-Toys Lab learning and designing toy concepts, followed by six months of industry training to develop prototypes based on real market needs. Each participant received a monthly stipend of Rs 25,000, helping them fully focus on research and practical work.

This effort marks a strong step toward building a modern and self-reliant toy industry in India.

India, waging a war against the pandemic of drug abuse, has strengthened drug control laws and improved surveillance to curb the supply and distribution of illicit drugs

Enemy within!
The silent epidemic of substance abuse

Lalit Gargg
Columnist

The growing prevalence of narcotic substances and the expanding deadly drug trade in India have today turned into a terrifying national crisis. Every other day, large consignments of drugs are seized in various states, painting a grim picture of the situation. This problem is no longer confined to any one state or region; it has spread in its most alarming form across Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal, Delhi, Maharashtra and almost the entire nation.

Particularly disturbing is the speed at which adolescents and the young generation are falling prey to drugs, a warning sign of a dangerous future. Drug addiction is no longer just a personal illness; it has become a preface to social destruction. Youngsters wandering through dark alleys, the breakdown of families, rising crime, and the erosion of moral values—all are destructive consequences of this drug epidemic.

The menace has now engulfed not only adults but teenagers as well. To arrange money for drugs, many of them are slipping into the world of crime and committing all kinds of offences. In several recent criminal cases, juveniles confessed that they turned to crime solely to fund their addiction. A parallel crisis is the supply of counterfeit medicines. Recently, several children in different states died after consuming toxic cough syrup.

Inter-state actions

Sensing this growing threat, a significant conference of drug controllers, police officials, and CID officers from seven states was held in Chandigarh to curb the circulation of fake medicines and narcotics. The aim was to bring these authorities onto a common platform for more effective action. It is commendable that for the first time, seven states have acknowledged the gravity of this crisis and begun a joint initiative. This conference will surely illuminate the path toward resolving this deadly and deepening problem.

Drug trade and counterfeit medicines

The drug trade and counterfeit medicines are not the problems of one state alone; they involve several national concerns. Massive consignments recovered from Punjab and coastal states have heightened the anxiety of the entire nation. A disturbing question arises: if such large quantities are being seized, how much more might be entering the country undetected? In Punjab's border districts, numerous cases have surfaced where drones from across the border were used to drop drugs and weapons.

Wider scope of drug deals

Recent statistics reveal that the drug trade is no longer restricted to narrow geographical boundaries. Punjab, which has only about 2.5% of India's total population, accounts for nearly half of the heroin seized in the country, an alarming indicator of how deep, widespread and organized the drug network has become. In Haryana's border districts, nearly 90% of the state's drug-related cases in the last five years have emerged, signaling how trafficking routes pass through state borders and permeate society.

Addiction goes beyond age limits

Nationwide surveys indicate that addiction is no longer confined to youth; millions of children, adolescents, and especially women and young girls are getting exposed to various intoxicants. This is not merely a matter of concern—it is a serious warning regarding the future of the next generation. Under the grip of addiction, children and youth are falling behind mentally, physically, socially, and academically. Families are breaking apart, financial conditions are deteriorating, and crime rates continue to rise. Theft, robbery, violence, murder, and even sexual crimes are increasing due to addiction.

No more a secret business

Another equally frightening dimension is that drug trafficking has evolved far beyond a secretive activity into a vast, well-organized smuggling system. Drone-based trafficking, international networks, manufacture of fake medicines, large-scale misuse of cough syrups and pharmaceutical drugs—all indicate that drugs are eating into India's social structure like termites. Drug mafias, criminal gangs, corrupt systems, and hostile neighbours together have created a parallel dangerous network that threatens law, morality, and human life.

A threat to social fabric

The Chandigarh conference brought forth many unsettling facts. Officials from Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Himachal, Delhi, Maharashtra, and other states agreed that if strict and coordinated measures are not taken now, the coming years could be disastrous. It is not an exaggeration to say that this crisis is severely damaging India's social fabric, youth power, and national progress.

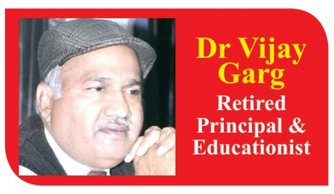
Need for multi-level actions

To stop this uncontrollable and terrifying danger, the government, police, judiciary, society, and families—all must work together. Laws alone or occasional raids cannot solve the issue. Strengthening laws and ensuring strict enforcement is essential. Drug trafficking, production of fake medicines, and illegal distribution must be met with punishments severe enough to instill fear in criminals. At present, offenders often escape with minor penalties or bail, emboldening them and allowing the illegal trade to flourish. Equally important is de-addiction and rehabilitation. Those trapped in addiction are not just offenders—they are victims. Families, society, and the government must understand them and provide support and ways to rebuild their lives. Although the number of de-addiction centers is increasing, their quality, facilities, medical support, counselling, and rehabilitation programs must be strengthened. People emerging from addiction need social acceptance, family support, and employment opportunities; otherwise, they fall back into the same dark world.

COLLECTIVE FIGHT NEED OF THE HOUR

This is a time of alarm. If we fail to take the drug epidemic seriously today, future generations will not forgive us. Addiction is an enemy of humanity. It pushes youth into darkness, destroys families, and hinders national development. Therefore, the nation must resolve not to leave this fight solely to government machinery but to embrace it as a collective responsibility. The government must enforce strict, transparent, and effective policies against narcotic substances and counterfeit medicines. Society must treat addiction not as a matter of shame, but one of awareness and treatment. And the youth must understand that addiction gives neither strength nor joy; it only steals life and future. The time has come for India to unite and take decisive action against this crisis. This alone is in the interest of the nation, society, and the future of humanity.

The Tree of Thousand Uses



Dr Vijay Garg
Retired Principal & Educationist

In the world of plants, some trees offer shade, some offer fruit, and some offer beauty, but there is one remarkable tree that offers all of these and much more. It is widely celebrated as 'The tree of thousand uses'. That tree is the Palmyra Palm (Borassus flabellifer), also known in India as Taal, Tad, Toddy Palm, or Borassus.

Why is it called tree of thousand uses?

The Palmyra is not just a tree; it is an entire ecosystem of utility. Every part of it—root to leaf—has a purpose. In traditional life across India, Sri Lanka, Southeast Asia, and Africa, it has been a dependable companion for centuries.

A natural storehouse of food

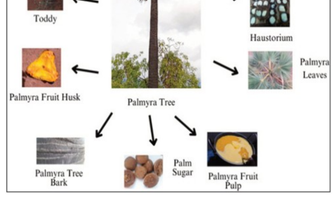
- **Fruit (Tadgola/Nungu):** Soft, jelly-like, refreshing, rich in minerals, perfect for summer.
- **Ripe palm fruit:** Used to prepare sweets, pulp desserts, jams, and traditional dishes.
- **Palm jaggery (Palm Gur):** A healthier alternative to sugar, rich in iron and antioxidants.

A lifeline in rural economies

- **Toddy/Neera:** The sap collected from the flower stalks is used to make an energy-rich drink (Neera) or fermented to produce toddy.
- **Palm sugar:** produced by boiling the sap—used in traditional medicines and sweets.
- A material for homes and tools
- **Wood:** Extremely durable, used in building homes, rafters, and beams; resistant to termites and decay
- **Leaves:** Woven into mats, baskets, fans, and containers; used for roofing in many coastal and rural homes; Historically used as writing material (Palm-leaf manuscripts)

Eco-friendly resource

- Zero wastage tree, nothing is thrown away.



- Biodegradable products from its leaves replace plastic items
- Strong roots prevent soil erosion in coastal and dry regions.

Cultural and historical importance

- In South India, palmyra leaves are used to record ancient scriptures.
- In rural festivals, its leaves and fruits play symbolic roles.
- Mentioned in ancient Tamil literature as 'Karpa Virutcha'—the wish-fulfilling tree.

A tree that supports wildlife

- Provides food for birds, bats, and small mammals
- Offers nesting sites for many species
- Helps maintain ecological balance in dry landscapes

A tree for health and healing

Various parts of the Palmyra are used in traditional medicine:
Sap: cooling and detoxifying
Roots: used for digestive issues
Leaves: used in herbal formulations
Fruits: hydrating and nutrient-rich

A tree that gives without limits

The Palmyra Palm is rightly honored as 'The tree of thousand uses' as it integrates itself into food, shelter, culture, medicine, economy, and ecology. In an era looking for sustainable and natural alternatives, this ancient tree offers lessons in resilience, resourcefulness, and harmony with nature.

The next time you see a tall palm rising against the sky, remember—you are looking at one of nature's most generous gifts, a tree that truly has a thousand uses.

Are coaching 'shops' killing poor NEET aspirants?

Coaching originated from sports extended to acting, music and public speaking. In India, in the educational field, it has developed into an obscene, money-minting business. Its main aim is to prepare candidates to appear for competitive examinations such as those for IAS, IFS and IPS posts.

Now, coaching is essential for getting seats for medical courses like MBBS. The entry exam is called NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) and is conducted by the National Testing Agency. NEET is far from 'neat' as it functions mainly for the rich, who can afford the high tuition fees. It is an unequal competition that cripples the poor, as reflected in a case which came up in the Madras High Court, and excerpted below.

The data submitted by the Tamil Nadu government to the Madras High Court on November 4, 2019 shows that only 2.1% of the students admitted into government and self-financing medical colleges in 2019 had passed the NEET without enrolling in private coaching centres.

A panel from the High Court observed that NEET had disadvantaged poor students and treated 'unequals as equals'. Also, 3,033 students secured MBBS seats by enrolling in private coaching 'shops', while only 48 students secured the seats without it. Thus, only 1.55% of the students in government medical colleges cleared the exams without getting coaching from private centres. In self-financing colleges, the percentage of students who secured medical seats without coaching is 3.15%.

The panel asked why the Central Government, which rolled back the programmes of the previous government, did not scrap NEET. On learning that private coaching institutes charged anywhere between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, the panel observed that the doors of most medical colleges were closed to poor students. "It is shocking to note that only negligible candidates have got admission without undergoing coaching. This means that medical education is not available to the poor," said the court. "Moreover, this will also put rural students in a disadvantageous position, as they lack the facilities to undergo coaching," it added. The panel also said that this issue should be taken note of by the Centre.

The court also heard a petition which demanded a proper counselling procedure for management quota seats. The case has highlighted the unequal competition between the rich, who can afford the high fees charged by the coaching 'shops,' and the poor, as well as the logistic advantage that urban candidates have compared to rural-based candidates who have no easy way of reaching coaching centres.

-Dr Vijay Garg
Retired principal

IND vs SA First ODI: India Narrowly Defeats South Africa by 17 Runs

Virat Kohli's brilliant century propels India to thrilling ODI win over South Africa

Brief scores

India 349/8 in 50 overs (Virat Kohli 135, KL Rahul 60, Rohit Sharma 57; Ottneil Baartman 2/60) beat South Africa 332 in 49.2 overs (Matthew Breetzke 72, Marco Jansen 70, Corbin Bosch 67; Kuldeep Yadav 4/68).

RANCHI

India eked out a thrilling 17-run victory against South Africa in the first ODI at JSCA Stadium, Ranchi, on Sunday, with Virat Kohli scoring a commanding 52nd ODI century. Chasing 350, the Proteas were bowled out for 332, despite valiant knocks from Mathew Breetzke (72), Marco Jansen (70), and Corbin Bosch (67). Kuldeep Yadav was the pick of the Indian bowlers, taking 4 for 68, while Prasidh Krishna claimed the crucial wicket of Bosch to end South Africa's hopes.

Kohli, playing only ODIs this season, anchored India's innings with a fluent 135-run knock off 120 balls, including seven sixes and 11 fours. His 136-run partnership with Rohit Sharma (57 off 51) set India on course for a formidable 349 for 8. Rohit survived a missed chance by Tony de Zorzi and attacked freely alongside Kohli, who showcased vintage touches with powerful drives and sixes. South Africa's innings saw early collapses, losing three wickets for just 11 runs. Breetzke and de Zorzi rebuilt the innings, followed by a 97-run stand between Breetzke and Jansen. Despite late resistance from Bosch and Prenelan Subrayen, India held their nerve.

Kohli's century reaffirmed his relevance in the ODI format and displayed his ability to control the game even on a flat deck. The thrilling win highlighted India's batting depth and resilience, while exposing inconsistencies in South Africa's bowling attack.

Kuldeep Yadav's four-wicket haul and Kohli's masterclass ensured India seized the advantage in the three-match series, setting up high expectations for the remaining ODIs.

Alcaraz Meets Messi as Inter Miami Clinch Eastern Conference Title

MIAMI

Carlos Alcaraz was the star guest at Chase Stadium as Lionel Messi's Inter Miami stormed into the MLS Cup Final with a dominant 5-1 victory over New York City FC in the Eastern Conference Final. The Spanish tennis sensation greeted Jordi Alba, Sergio Busquets and Luis Suárez before kickoff and shared a brief exchange with Messi, who later delivered another decisive performance on Miami's road to history.

After the match, Alcaraz presented Inter Miami with their first-ever Eastern Conference championship trophy, with Messi stepping forward to receive it. The two global superstars exchanged smiles and a warm embrace, marking a memorable crossover moment between elite football and tennis.

The celebrations were matched by a commanding on-field display. Inter Miami head coach Javier Mascherano lauded his team's performance, saying they had executed exactly what they had envisioned. "One always imagines the best when thinking about games—dominating, creating clear chances,"

Tennis star Alcaraz joined Miami's celebrations after Messi led a commanding semifinal win

Mascherano said. "We knew it would be difficult. New York didn't create chances, and until the 60th minute they were still alive."

Mascherano credited his squad for their belief and cohesion during the final stretch of the season. "The merit goes to the players for convincing themselves of where we wanted to go.

We've reached the end of the season with a brotherhood inside the team—everyone pulling in the same direction," he said.

He also acknowledged the foundation laid by former head coach Gerardo Martino. "It would be unfair not to recognise what Martino did—giving this team its identity, competing for trophies, pushing the club to another level," he noted. With momentum, unity and star power on their side, Inter Miami now move within touching distance of their dream MLS Cup victory, set to be played at home in front of their supporters.

Kohli Breaks Tendulkar's Record with Stunning 52nd ODI Century

RANCHI

Virat Kohli added yet another landmark to his extraordinary career, smashing his 52nd ODI hundred in the first match of the three-game series against South Africa in Ranchi on Sunday. The century, a chanceless display of control and timing, extended his record as the male player with the most hundreds in a single format, surpassing Sachin Tendulkar's iconic tally of 49 ODI tons. Kohli's achievement carried double significance. Not only did he go past Tendulkar's ODI record, but he also overtook the Master Blaster's milestone of 51 Test centuries—previously the highest number of tons by any male batter in one format. By reaching the triple-figure mark in Ranchi, Kohli became the first player ever to score 52 centuries in any single format of international cricket. The innings also continued his prolific run against South Africa, marking his sixth ODI century against the Proteas. Prior to this knock, Kohli had shared the record for most ODI hundreds against South Africa (five) with Tendulkar and Australia's David Warner. Sunday's masterclass pushed him clear of both. Kohli's latest three-figure score took his total tally of international hundreds to 83, placing him second on the all-time list behind Tendulkar's monumental 100 centuries. It was an authoritative reminder that the 36-year-old remains unwavering in his pursuit of cricket's most elusive milestone.

Kohli's Ranchi masterclass delivered records, dominance and another milestone in his legendary career

Coming in early after Yashasvi Jaiswal's dismissal, Kohli steadied India's innings in partnership with Rohit Sharma. His knock, highlighted by trademark cover drives and immaculate strike rotation, laid the foundation for a formidable total. Kohli is also closing in on another milestone—28,000 international runs. Only Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara have reached the mark, and Kohli began the South Africa series needing 337 runs to join that elite club.

Treesa–Gayatri Defend Syed Modi Title with Gritty Three-Game Triumph

LUCKNOW

Defending champions Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand produced a spirited and tactically brilliant performance to retain the women's doubles crown at the Syed Modi International Super 300 on Sunday. The top-seeded Indian duo overcame Japan's Kaho Osawa and Mai Tanabe 17-21, 21-13, 21-15 in a gripping, one hour and 16-minute final marked by long rallies and fearless attacking play.

Competing in only their second tournament since Gayatri's return from a five-month shoulder injury layoff, the Indians began on the back foot. The opening game was a showcase of relentless exchanges, including a 49-shot rally that set the tone. Osawa and Tanabe maintained consistent pressure, capitalising on late Indian errors to clinch the opener despite spirited resistance from Treesa and Gayatri. Switching sides ignited a turnaround. The Indians stormed to a 9-2 lead in the second game, showing improved anticipation and sharper placement. Treesa's powerful backcourt smashes and Gayatri's steady net presence helped them maintain an 11-5 edge at the interval. They kept dictating the pace, racing to 20-11 before forcing the match into a decider with controlled aggression.

The deciding game saw Treesa and Gayatri edge ahead 7-4, though brief miscommunication let the Japanese pair close the gap. The Indians, however, regrouped with crisp net interceptions and clever variations. Treesa's deceptive net shots and Gayatri's incisive smashes helped restore a healthy cushion at the mid-game break.

AC Milan Edges Lazio to Go Top; Yildiz Fires Juventus to Victory

MILAN

AC Milan climbed to the top of Serie A with a gritty 1-0 victory over Lazio, overcoming the absence of Christian Pulisic to take advantage of a pivotal weekend in the title race. Rafael Leão struck early in the second half, ensuring Milan moved a point above Roma and three ahead of Napoli. Inter Milan, Bologna and Como remain close behind, each just a further point back. Buoyed by last weekend's derby win over Inter, Milan entered the match with momentum but without Pulisic, who suffered a muscle strain shortly after returning from injury. Lazio threatened repeatedly, forcing goalkeeper Mike Maignan into several sharp saves before Milan crafted the breakthrough in the 51st minute with a slick team move finished calmly by Leão. Late controversy erupted in stoppage time when Lazio appealed for a penalty after an Alessio Romagnoli volley struck the arm of Milan defender Strahinja Pavlović. A lengthy VAR review followed, during which Milan coach Massimiliano Allegri was sent off for dissent along with a Lazio assistant. The referee ultimately deemed Pavlović had been fouled in the buildup, nullifying the handball. Elsewhere, Juventus continued their resurgence as Kenan Yildiz delivered another standout performance in a 2-1 comeback win over Cagliari. After Sebastiano Esposito stunned the home crowd with an opener, Yildiz equalised moments later following a neat one-two with Khephren Thuram. The 20-year-old then produced a superb individual goal in first-half stoppage time, driving past defenders before finishing into the far corner. Juventus remain seventh, five points off leaders Milan, while Cagliari sit 14th, just above the relegation zone.

In the day's key relegation clash, Daniele De Rossi secured his first win as Genoa manager with a 2-1 victory over bottom-placed Hellas Verona.

PM Modi Hails India's Women Blind Cricket Team for Historic T20 Win

NEW DELHI

India's women's blind cricket team has made the nation proud by winning the inaugural Women's Blind T20 World Cup, a feat celebrated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the 128th episode of his monthly radio program, Mann Ki Baat.

In his address, PM Modi lauded the team's exceptional performance, highlighting that the Indian squad lifted the prestigious title without losing a single match. "Our women's team won the Blind Cricket World Cup. It's a great achievement that the Indian team won this tournament without losing a single match. Our countrymen are very proud of every player on this team," he said.

India scripted history with a dominant seven-wicket victory against Nepal in the final at Colombo. After bowling first, the Indian bowlers restricted Nepal to 114/5 in 20 overs, displaying discipline and precision. During the chase, Indian batters raced past 100 runs in just 10 overs, leaving no chance for a comeback.

Opener Phula Saren's match-winning knock of 44 runs off 27 balls, including four boundaries, earned her the Player of the Match award. She partnered with Karuna K, who contributed 42 runs off 27 balls, steering India to victory in the 13th over. Captain Deepika TC expressed immense pride in the team's achievement, noting, "We are very proud, and it is a huge win. Our entire team worked very hard. It is a very strong team, and other teams are afraid of playing with us. We are even ready to play with the men's team."

India's unbeaten run in the tournament began with a win over Sri Lanka, followed by a 57-run triumph against Australia, a 10.2-over chase against Pakistan, and a nine-wicket semi-final win over Australia.

The historic campaign concluded with the convincing final victory over Nepal, marking a milestone in Indian women's blind cricket. This achievement not only sets a benchmark for the sport but also inspires aspiring cricketers across the country.

West Ham Legend Billy Bonds Dies Aged 79

LONDON

West Ham United and the football world are mourning the passing of club legend Billy Bonds, who died peacefully on Sunday morning aged 79. Bonds, the Hammers' record appearance maker and two-time FA Cup-winning captain, spent 21 years at the club as a player and later served as manager from 1990 to 1994.

Bonds made 799 appearances for West Ham between 1967 and 1988, captaining the team to FA Cup triumphs in 1975 and 1980. He also won the old Second Division title and twice led the club to promotion into the top flight. Recognised for his services to football, Bonds received an MBE in 1988.

West Ham paid tribute to their "legendary player, coach, and manager," announcing a period of appreciation before the Premier League clash with Liverpool and a full tribute at the home fixture against Aston Villa on 14 December. "Rest in peace Billy, our courageous, inspirational, lion-hearted leader," the club stated.

Bonds joined West Ham from Charlton Athletic in May 1967 for £47,000. He won four Player of the Year awards and in 2013 received the club's first-ever Lifetime Achievement Award. Five years later, fans voted him West Ham's greatest ever player. In 2019, a stand at London Stadium was named in his honour alongside club greats Bobby Moore and Sir Trevor Brooking.

His family described him as "the most kind, loyal, selfless, and loving person" who treasured every moment at West Ham. "He will always be in our hearts and eternally missed," they said.

Ahead of the Liverpool game, all players will wear black armbands, and captain Jarrod Bowen will walk out with Bonds' shirt before a period of applause and laying the shirt at the stand named after him. Former players, including Joe Cole, also paid tribute.

ROHIT SHARMA Smashes ODI Sixes World Record, Overtakes Shahid Afridi

Rohit Sharma creates history in Ranchi, surpassing Shahid Afridi's longstanding ODI sixes record

RANCHI

Rohit Sharma added another monumental feat to his illustrious career by breaking the world record for the most sixes in One-Day Internationals. The landmark came during the first ODI against South Africa at the JSCA International Stadium in Ranchi, where Rohit struck three towering sixes to move past Pakistan legend Shahid Afridi's tally of 351.

Needing exactly three sixes to claim the world record, Rohit equalled Afridi with back-to-back hits off Prenelan Subrayen in the 15th over. Moments later, he launched a signature pull shot over fine leg off Marco Jansen to take his sixes tally to 352, rewriting the record books.

The India skipper already holds the record for most sixes in T20Is (205) and now boasts 88 sixes in Tests, taking his cumulative international sixes tally to 642 — another world record.

Rohit also notched up his 60th ODI fifty during the innings. After a cautious start and an early reprieve when Tony de Zorzi dropped him at deep square leg, Rohit shifted gears smoothly. He unfurled crisp boundaries off Jansen and built a commanding 136-run stand with Virat Kohli for the second wicket, their second century partnership in successive ODIs.

Rohit's half-century came off 47 deliveries, featuring five fours and three sixes, before he was trapped lbw by Jansen for 57 off 51 balls. His record-breaking feat further cements his legacy as one of cricket's greatest stroke-makers, particularly renowned for his effortless power-hitting and dominance across formats.

MOST SIXES IN ODIS

- 352 – Rohit Sharma
- 351 – Shahid Afridi
- 331 – Chris Gayle
- 270 – Sanath Jayasuriya
- 229 – MS Dhoni

Andre Russell Ends IPL Journey, Joins KKR as Power Coach

NEW DELHI

Kolkata Knight Riders icon Andre Russell has officially announced his retirement from the Indian Premier League after a glittering 14-season career, bringing an emotional close to one of the league's most explosive batting chapters. The West Indies all-rounder, who helped KKR lift two IPL titles, confirmed that he would transition into the franchise's support staff as their new Power Coach for the 2026 season.

Russell was released by KKR ahead of the upcoming mini-auction, ending a 12-season association as a player.

However, instead of entering the auction pool, the 37-year-old chose loyalty over continuation, stating he could not imagine wearing the jersey of any other franchise.

He said he wanted to leave the league "on a high" rather than fading out, and that seeing digitally altered images of himself in other team colours had given him "sleepless nights."

In his farewell message, Russell highlighted the memories he built with KKR—from match-winning knocks to MVP seasons in 2015 and 2019. He said the decision to retire felt right, even though fans might have expected him to continue.

Russell revealed that discussions with CEO Venky Mysore and co-owner Shah Rukh Khan eventually shaped his next chapter with the team. The role of Power Coach resonated with him, he said, as it aligned perfectly with his identity—power hitting, impactful bowling, and infectious on-field energy. Russell will now focus on guiding KKR players across departments, leveraging his experience and trademark aggression.

Across 140 IPL matches, Russell amassed 2651 runs at a strike rate of 174.18 and claimed 123 wickets. With 2593 runs and 122 wickets for KKR alone, he leaves behind a legacy as one of the franchise's greatest match-winners.

Russell fondly recalled iconic KKR moments, explaining why retiring now felt right

Weight Shift Gamble for Mirabai Chanu as 2028 Olympic Challenge Looms

BENGALURU

The International Weightlifting Federation's recent decision to drop the 48kg category for the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics has forced India's star lifter Mirabai Chanu into yet another significant transition. The Tokyo silver medallist, who built her legacy in the now-discontinued class, will need to move up to 53kg — a shift filled with both opportunity and uncertainty.

Chanu, already accustomed to multiple category adjustments in recent years, now confronts one of the biggest changes of her career.

Her long-time coach Vijay Sharma, however, views the development positively, calling it "the best thing possible." According to him, moving up is more manageable than cutting further weight, and the immediate focus remains on next year's major events — the Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and World Championships. Chanu will continue in the 48kg class through 2026 before beginning a gradual bulk-up phase.

Her dominance in the lower category remains unquestioned. Earlier this year, she swept all three Commonwealth Championship records en route to qualifying for the Glasgow CWG. The Asian Games, though, pose a tougher task. India has not won a weightlifting medal at the Asiad since 1998, but new rules permitting only one athlete per nation per category and awarding separate medals for snatch and clean & jerk could work in Chanu's favour.

Post-Asiad, the challenge intensifies. A carefully planned off-season will be crucial as she begins adding lean muscle mass — a process expected to take six to nine months. Nutrition experts and the IWLF support staff will guide her through building strength without compromising speed or explosiveness.

The gap to the world's best in the 53kg division is significant, with North Korea's Kang Hyon Gong and Romania's Mihaela Cambei currently leading the pack. Yet sports scientists believe Chanu's experience, refined technique and structured training give her a fighting chance.

Whether this forced shift becomes a blessing or a setback remains uncertain, but the road to Los Angeles promises to be one of the toughest, yet most defining chapters of her remarkable career.

Five Smart Pickups Mumbai Indians Could Target to Plug Key Gaps

MUMBAI

With only ₹2.75 crore left in their purse and five squad vacancies to fill, Mumbai Indians (MI) will enter the IPL 2026 mini-auction on December 16 in Abu Dhabi with a sharply defined, role-specific strategy. The franchise has retained its superstar core of Rohit Sharma, Hardik Pandya, Jasprit Bumrah, Suryakumar Yadav and Tilak Varma, but the release of four key players—Reece Topley, Lizaad Williams, Karn Sharma and Vignesh Puthur—has highlighted the areas MI must address: an overseas pacer, an Indian spinner, wicketkeeping depth and domestic fast-bowling support.

Despite their limited funds, MI are expected to prioritise balance over big-ticket buys. The franchise's philosophy this season appears to centre on buying specialists rather than investing in marquee names, especially with established stars like Trent Boult, Mitchell Santner and Deepak Chahar already anchoring the squad. Among the top overseas options, New Zealand's Matt Henry stands out as a disciplined middle-overs strike bowler whose efficiency and affordability could suit MI's budget. For spin, a potential reunion with Rahul Chahar offers familiarity with Wankhede's conditions and a proven leg-spin option alongside Mayank Markande.

In domestic pace, MI may revisit Aqib Nabi, the left-arm swing bowler from Jammu & Kashmir whom the franchise has previously trialled. His powerplay wicket-taking ability makes him a cost-effective successor to Arjun Tendulkar. Simarjeet Singh, a reliable Indian seamer, also fits MI's requirement for steady domestic fast bowling depth. To bolster wicketkeeping backup, Prithvi Shaw—also an explosive opener—could be a strategic addition, especially if MI seek insurance behind primary keeper Ryan Rickelton.

With 20 players already secured, MI are expected to avoid aggressive bidding wars and focus on securing impact-driven uncapped talent to reinforce their campaign for a top-four finish in IPL 2026.

Delay in League Season Hindering Indian Football, Says Coach KHALID JAMIL

KOLKATA

Senior men's national football team head coach Khalid Jamil has warned that the continued delay in resuming the Indian Super League (ISL) season is adversely impacting Indian football, especially at a time when the national team's FIFA ranking has dipped sharply.

Speaking to the media, Jamil stressed that restarting domestic competitions was essential to restore momentum.

"I feel the ISL should resume at the earliest. It is important that the players get the chance to play enough competitive matches," he said. "Development takes time, and we must maintain a positive mindset if we want things to get back on track."

India recently suffered its second straight defeat in the Asian Cup qualification group stage, sliding to 142 in the latest FIFA rankings. This marks a steep fall from the 99th place the Blue Tigers achieved in July 2023 after winning the SAFF Championship. The decline began midway through the Asian Cup 2027 qualifiers in 2024 and worsened after a 0-1 loss to Bangladesh, pushing India to its lowest position in nearly ten years.

"The rankings reflect performances over time, but rankings alone don't matter. What matters is winning matches — and for that, we must start working hard," Jamil said.

The national coach emphasised broadening the talent pool by scouting younger players as well as tapping into the Indian-origin talent base abroad. "We are thinking about inducting more under-23 and under-21 players in the national team. We will begin scouting once the ISL and I-League resume," he added.

Jamil also welcomed the recent inclusion of Ryan Williams under the Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) category, saying more such players could significantly strengthen the national squad.

With India at a crucial juncture, Jamil believes only consistent competitive match time can help the team rebuild and climb back up the global ladder.

Joe Root Questions Need for Pink-Ball Test Ahead of Crucial Ashes Clash

BRISBANE

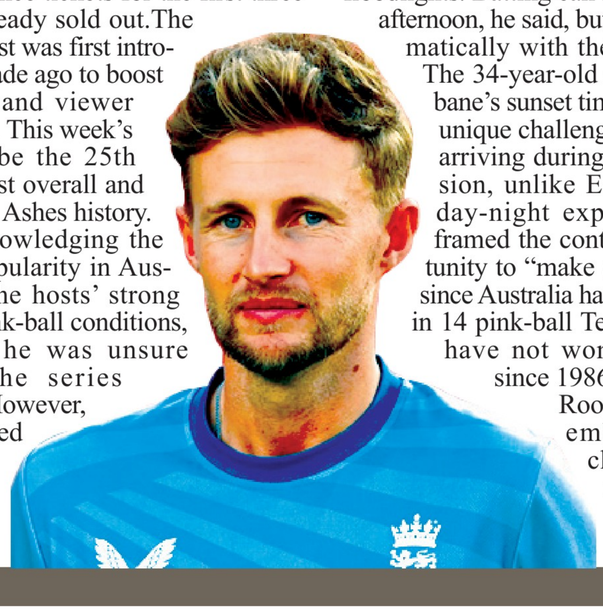
England batter Joe Root has expressed reservations about the need for a pink-ball Test in the upcoming Ashes series, even as excitement peaks ahead of Thursday's day-night match at the Gabba. Root questioned whether the Ashes — already one of cricket's most anticipated contests — requires the added element of a day-night fixture, especially since tickets for the first three days are already sold out.The day-night Test was first introduced a decade ago to boost attendance and viewer engagement. This week's clash will be the 25th pink-ball Test overall and the fourth in Ashes history. While acknowledging the format's popularity in Australia and the hosts' strong record in pink-ball conditions, Root said he was unsure whether the series "needs" it. However, he maintained that he had no objections to its presence, noting that both boards had agreed to it well in advance.

Joe Root doubts whether a pink-ball Test is necessary despite strong ticket demand

Root highlighted that the scheduling — with a 2pm start — aligns perfectly with primetime broadcast slots in Australia while still remaining accessible for UK audiences.

Having played in all seven of England's previous day-night Tests, he warned that the format demands heightened alertness, as conditions can shift rapidly under floodlights. Batting can feel placid in the afternoon, he said, but can change dramatically with the onset of dusk.

The 34-year-old added that Brisbane's sunset timing would bring unique challenges, with twilight arriving during the second session, unlike England's recent day-night experiences. Root framed the contest as an opportunity to "make a bit of history," since Australia have lost only once in 14 pink-ball Tests and England have not won at the Gabba since 1986-87.



Root concluded that embracing these challenges could make victory even sweeter for England.

Junior hockey World Cup: India slams 17 past Oman

CHENNAI

India stormed to its second consecutive victory at the FIH Junior Men's Hockey World Cup, crushing Oman 17-0 in a one-sided Pool-B encounter at the SDAT–Mayor Radhakrishnan Stadium. The hosts dominated from the outset, showcasing sharp attacking play and relentless pressure against an Omani side that entered the tournament as a late replacement for Pakistan. Despite the commanding win, India's penalty-corner conversion remained a concern. The team failed to score from its first 10 attempts before Anmol Ekka finally broke through off the 11th. India earned 19 penalty corners in total but converted only four — an issue the coaching staff will want to iron out before tougher tests ahead.Earlier in the day, Bangladesh delivered one of the most spirited performances of the tournament despite a 5-3 loss to Australia in its Pool-F opener. Playing under heavy rain, the debutants matched the former champions in intensity during the second half. Amirul Islam, who has already represented the senior side, scored a brilliant hat-trick — all from penalty corners — earning widespread praise.

Last edition's runner-up France signalled its intent with a resounding 11-1 demolition of South Korea. Arthur Plauche starred with a hat-trick, while goalkeeper Antoine Robert impressed with several outstanding saves to deny Korean opportunities.

In other matches across Chennai and Madurai, Switzerland edged Chile 3-2, Germany routed Canada 7-0, and the Netherlands defeated England 5-3. Malaysia too registered a strong 5-1 win over Austria, while South Africa beat Ireland 2-1.

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